MARRIAGE and the FAMILY in AMERICAN CULTURE

TRUXAL and MERRILL

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MARRIAGE
AND THE
FAMILY
IN
AMERICAN CULTURE

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Herbert Blumer, Editor

MARRIAGE
AND THE
FAMILY
IN
AMERICAN CULTURE

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PREFACE

This edition is, for all practical purposes, a new book. It has been rethought, revised, and substantially rewritten. Two entirely new sections have been added, consisting of four chapters each and dealing with courtship and marital relationships, respectively. The other sections have been pruned in some places, amplified in others, and otherwise modified elsewhere. In terms of net content, therefore, this is more than a revision.

The most important innovation is indicated by the change in title. *The Family in American Culture* has been broadened to *Marriage and the Family in American Culture*. The addition of "*Marriage and*" symbolizes the new approach from the family as a social institution in a particular social setting, to courtship, *marriage, and* the family in the same setting. This shift in emphasis reflects current trends in instruction at the college and university level, whereby courses dealing with the family are rapidly changing to courses including courtship and marriage as well.

Pursuant to this change in orientation, as noted, two entire sections have been added. The section on "Courtship and Marriage" deals with the preliminaries to marriage in contemporary American society. The chapter headings indicate the subject matter of this new section: "Courtship and Society," "Courtship and Romantic Love," Courtship and Dating," and "Courtship and Marital Choice." Three of these chapters are almost entirely new; and the fourth, "Courtship and Romantic Love," has been revised and placed in a more appropriate context.

The section on "The Relationships of Marriage" is the second major addition. As sociologists, the authors are concerned with marriage primarily as a *social* relationship or pattern of relationships of which the general tone is established by the culture. The chapter headings indicate the nature of the material in this section: "Social Roles and Marital Interaction," "Conjugal Roles and Marital Interaction," "The Physiology of Marital Interaction," and "The Factors in Marital Success." Here again, three of the chapters are almost entirely new; and the fourth, "The Physiology of Marital Interaction," represents earlier material that has been rethought and reoriented.

Within this general framework of change, however, certain important aspects of the first edition have remained. The authors have retained and, indeed, reinforced a distinctive feature of the earlier work: the emphasis upon the cultural setting of the family. Marriage and the family, the authors maintain, can be completely understood only in their appropriate social and cultural setting. Hence, this setting has been retained, and the cultural point of view has been stressed at all stages in the family cycle, from dating to divorce, and from courtship to conjugal affection.

The years since the publication of the first edition (1947) have seen rapid advances in the scientific study of personality. These advances have been made by sociologists, psychologists, psychiatrists, anthropologists, and by persons representing different combinations of these and related disciplines. Of all the fields included within the orbit of the family, the study of personality has brought forth the most spectacular and fruitful additions. The authors have accordingly incorporated many of these emergent insights into the discussion of personality as it unfolds within the family matrix.

The statistical material has been completely revised and brought up to date. In this process, the authors have been aided by the admirable services of the United States government, notably those of the Bureau of the Census and the Federal Security Agency. The authors have, as far as possible, written this information into the body of the text where it will presumably be read, rather than left it in unadorned tables where it is often ignored. In a number of places, the data have been enlivened by animated charts, although judicious (rather than extensive) use has been made of this device. The authors believe that there is nothing quite so effective in conveying ideas as the written word.

We wish to extend our appreciation once more to Dr. Herbert Blumer, editor of the Prentice-Hall Sociology series, for his sympathetic editorial guidance. For their critical appraisals of chapter 12 and part V, the authors are grateful to Professor Jane D. McCarrell and Associate Professor Beulah Compton of the faculty of Hood College. We also wish to thank Emily Archibald Merrill for her assistance in typing the manuscript, reading the proof, and preparing the indexes. We trust, finally, that the present volume will offer some additional insight to those of our readers who will, in the proximate future, enter upon the great adventure of marriage and family living.

Andrew G. Truxal
Francis E. Merrill

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PART I

THE FAMILY IN AMERICAN CULTURE

1

THE NATURE OF MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY

THE FAMILY is the basic institution of society. We are all members of one family, and the majority of us are members of two. These units may be called *the family of orientation* and *the family of procreation*. The family in which we are born (orientation) cares for us in helpless infancy, nurtures and instructs us in childhood, struggles with us during adolescence, and finally sends us out into the world as mature men and women. The family that we form by marriage (procreation) provides the social setting within which we bear and rear our own children, furnishes us affectionate companionship and emotional security, and gives us a sense of belonging to a sympathetic group in an impersonal world.[1] The most important years of our lives are spent in one or the other of these family groups, with most persons living independently of them during only a few years of early adulthood, and many lonely ones spending their last years as widows and widowers.

The Study of the Family

The influence of the family upon the individual far transcends the mere enumeration of the years spent in the family of orientation or of procreation. The influence of mother, father, and brothers and sisters upon the infant and child is so all-embracing that the latter can never completely understand the nature and extent of these influences, much less emancipate himself from them. The life of the adult is also determined in many ways by the family that he forms through marriage, although each grown member of this group enters with his personality already substantially formed. As parents of the next generation, the new father and mother pass on the social heritage to their children and mold their lives in turn.

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[1] George Peter Murdock, *Social Structure* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1949), p. 13.

The family is a unique form of human relationship, and this uniqueness gives it a special significance. The general characteristics that set it off from all other forms of human association may be summarized as follows: [2]

(a) *Universality.* The family is found in some form in all societies and even in a rudimentary form among animals.

(b) *Emotional Basis.* The family is based upon the most profound primary emotional and organic impulses of our nature and is supplemented by many powerful secondary emotions and sentiments.

(c) *Priority.* The family is first in point of time in its influence upon the individual and thus modifies his behavior at its most plastic stage.

(d) *Size.* Of all the social institutions, the family is the smallest, particularly in modern society, and hence is the scene of the most highly charged and concentrated emotional relationships.

(e) *Central Position.* The family forms the central nucleus for all other institutions comprising the community, a situation only partially modified by the recent decentralization of many of its traditional functions.

(f) *Responsibility.* The family inflicts the heaviest and most continuous responsibilities upon its members, whether upon the men gainfully employed outside the home or the women constantly working within it.

(g) *Social Control.* The family is subject to the most rigid social controls of any institution, both formal control through law and informal control through custom and taboo.

The Interest in the Family

The majority of individuals have a very strong *personal* interest in the study of the family. They have all, with certain rare exceptions, experienced some family relationship during their early years and bring to their adult lives many conscious memories, most of which are invested with the pleasant nostalgia of the past. Most people look back upon their early family experiences with pleasure and view them in terms of the consciously remembered highlights of emotional satisfaction. The unconscious impressions of these years may not have the same uniformly pleasurable tone, but such memories do not trouble the waking lives of the average person, who thinks of his parents with love and of his brothers and sisters with affection.

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[2] Adapted from Robert M. MacIver, *Society* (New York: Rinehart & Company, 1937), pp. 197-99.

With or without complete affection, however, the first experience of the individual is so dominated by his immediate family that he cannot truthfully say where his early family left off and the outside world began. His first experiences with religion, property, sex, morality, patriotism, and similar social values—not to mention the rudimentary matters of food, clothing, and shelter—are so inextricably intermingled with his family that he could not separate them if he tried. Most people do not want to try, because these family-transmitted values have become an integral part of their personalities. To question these values and the role of the family in their inculcation would be to question one's own personality, integrity, and individual status. Such a prospect would be unthinkable and would furthermore entail the most demoralizing soul-searching on the part of the individual, plus a revolution in society. The individual is thus interested in the family because it is literally a part of himself. He has been born within its protecting confines, nurtured by its principal members, and formed by its norms and values.

The student of society is also interested in the family, although upon a considerably more advanced level than the solipsistic one of the person who naïvely sees in the family a projection of his own personality. The family is also a *social* institution, by which we mean a relationship sanctioned by the larger society, and one whose forms and customs are largely determined by the social heritage. Although the role of the individual family in transmitting the inheritance of the past is a central and indispensable one, the members do not construct this function out of whole cloth. They are merely the unconscious agents of society in transmitting the vast residue of the past to future generations, represented in each individual case by the tiny and helpless infant, who knows nothing but can learn much.

In addition to this central function of transmitting the heritage of past generations, the family also serves as the center for many other activities crucial to the continued operation of society. Although the nature and extent of these activities have been considerably curtailed by the changes in the larger society, the family still maintains its central position in the social structure. In order to understand this structure, we must understand the part the family plays therein and the reciprocal relationship between it and the larger society. This is the second or *social* interest in the study of the family in American culture.[3]

The study of the family involves both concrete and abstract considerations. Most of us think in terms of concrete family situations, usually our own, and unconsciously generalize from these individual situations to those of other families in our own culture, and from them to families in different cultures. In the sense of considerable personal experience with family life, we are all "experts" in the field, with pronounced ideas and preconceptions on these concrete relationships. On the abstract level, however, the average person has no such background, since the abstract aspects of institutions do not appear without considerable immersion in the social and psychological disciplines. For example, every person has been instructed by the intimate members of his family in such matters as religion, sexual morality, and attitudes toward his parents. He is familiar with these matters in terms of specific beliefs and prohibitions, which have become so intimate a part of his personality that he is not conscious of their origin. At the same time that he is aware of these specific forms of behavior, however, he is usually unaware of their social origin and their long history in the development of his group.

The individual is therefore conscious of his individual family, the specific relationships within it, the concrete doctrines of right and wrong he has learned from its associations, and the mutual affection for his immediate kin. He is only vaguely conscious that his family is a small group of persons united by marriage and blood, whose relationships are not determined by trial and error, but are part of a long cultural inheritance in which the relative importance of any individual or family has been negligible.[4]

The student thus needs considerable instruction in the abstract rather than the concrete aspects of the family. His experiences with his own family and those with which he has come in contact have familiarized him in concrete terms with many of the common situations of family relationships, organization, and disorganization. At the same time, he has probably never considered what these situations mean in terms of the society of which his own family is merely a small part. The role of customs, laws, conventions, traditions, and taboos in his own family experience may never have been made clear through abstract analysis. He may also be unaware of the quantitative aspects of the family in the American scene and the extent to which his own family experience is or is not typical.

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[3] Charles Horton Cooley, *Social Organization* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909), p. 365.

[4] Jessie Bernard, *American Family Behavior* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1942), chap. 1.

With these considerations in mind, we have consciously minimized the importance of case studies in this treatment. Such concrete material comes readily to the mind of the student, growing out of his own experiences and those of his friends and acquaintances. The abstract aspects are, however, not so apparent. The subsequent discussion will therefore endeavor to answer certain basic questions.

(a) What kind of society is the American society whose marriage and family are being studied; how did it come to be what it is, and what are some of the characteristics that differentiate it from all others?

(b) How is the cultural configuration of the American family interrelated with pre-marital customs and marital interaction?

(c) Exactly what is the American family? This will involve a detailed analysis of the structure, composition, and functions of the family, stressing both its permanent and its changing characteristics.

(d) Why is the family so important in fashioning personality? This will entail an examination of the family from within in order to assess its influence on the various stages of the life history of the individual. Upon the results of these four analyses, the answer to the last query is dependent.

(e) What factors *within* the family and in the larger setting of American society have resulted in family instability?

The Nature of Marriage

For practical purposes, marriage and the family can be discussed as interwoven parts of a total process. Marriage is the socially defined device by which two individuals, in our culture, initiate the process that ordinarily culminates in the complete family. Marriage is thus "a complex of customs centering upon the relationship between a sexually associating pair of adults within the family. Marriage defines the manner of establishing and terminating such a relationship, the normative behavior and reciprocal obligations within it, and the locally accepted restrictions upon its personnel." [5]

Man shares with the animal the sex drive that leads to the union of the sexes and the procreation of the species. But here the gap widens immeasurably, for man marries, and animals merely mate. In all human societies, the primordial mating urge has been brought under control by the socially derived set of regulations that we know as marriage. The rigidity with which these regulations are normally enforced indicates the importance society places upon them and the unconscious fear that their violation will be inimical to the welfare of the group.

Marriage therefore cannot be explained solely in terms of the sex urge. However powerful this urge may be, it is too transient and spasmodic to explain such an enduring institution as marriage. Furthermore, in many societies, the satisfaction of the sex urge outside of marriage is acceptable and does not meet the taboos we associate therewith. Sumner and Keller comment upon this situation as follows: "Marriage is primarily a form of cooperation in self-maintenance, and its bond is tighter or looser according to the advantages of the partnership under the existing circumstances. . . . The union of the sexes is primarily industrial. It has largely so remained through history and is of that character now. . . . In so far as it has become conjugal, parental, poetical, emotional, or ethical, that is due to advance of civilization and belongs to the higher grades of the cultured." [6]

The forms that marriage has taken are primarily of interest to the student of comparative cultures and need not detain us unduly. There is evidence to indicate that all the possible combinations of the sexes have found practical expression in one or more social settings. *Polygamy* refers to the general practice of having more than one spouse at the same time. *Polygyny* is that form of polygamy in which one man has more than one wife, whereas *polyandry* is a rarer relationship in which one wife has several husbands. If the latter are brothers, the practice is called fraternal polyandry; otherwise, it is known as nonfraternal polyandry. Still rarer is the so-called group-

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[5] Murdock, *Social Structure*, p. 1.

[6] William G. Sumner and A. G. Keller, *The Science of Society* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1927), III, 1505-8.

marriage, in which a group of males (related or not) are considered married to a group of females.[7]

The most general form of marriage is that which appeals to the reader as the "proper" form, namely, monogamy: one husband and one wife, at least at the same time. In many societies where polygyny is sanctioned, the usual practice is to have only one wife. In contrast to the Islamic world where polygyny prevails, Western society has had such a long and unbroken tradition of monogamy that it is regarded as the only correct relationship between the sexes. The norm of lifelong monogamy remains the socially accepted condition of marriage, even though the rising divorce rate has resulted, for a considerable minority, in a kind of "successive" polygyny or polyandry. Monogamous marriage is of fundamental importance to our society, determining the channelization of the sex drive and hence defining such violations of the mores as prostitution, fornication, adultery, and illegitimacy.

Forms of the Family

The aforementioned difficulty of abstract thinking on the family appears as soon as we encounter the fundamental question of definition. When we ask, "What is the family?" the average person will answer readily that "the family is the universal group made up of husband, wife, and children." But this is a most inadequate general definition of the family and does not warrant the designation of "universal" so positively applied thereto. Indeed, for statistical purposes, this definition does not even apply to the family in our own society, as we shall shortly see. We may therefore profitably make a brief comparative journey in time and space, with a view to indicating that the family is a product of its society and varies from one society to another.

1. Among the Nairs, for example, "the family, for all practical purposes, consists of one's mother's mother and one's mother's mother's brother who is the male economic representative of the household, one's mother, mother's brothers, mother's sisters, mother's sisters' children, and one's brothers and sisters. If any man were to be regarded as socially one's father, it would actually be the man who had been married to and divorced from one's mother years before; for by

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[7] For a brief discussion of marriage and its forms, cf. Ralph Linton, *The Study of Man* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1936), chap. 11.

Brahman law, a woman can enter into only one religious marriage. Here, then, is a family in which one biological parent has been socially eliminated."[8]

2. Among the Andamanese, "children are adopted from horde to horde; a child by the time he reaches puberty may have had three or four sets of fathers and mothers, towards all of whom he owes the obligations and claims the privileges of a son. The tenuousness of the bond between children and a pair of parents, who may be cut off at any moment by death, is strengthened by doubling and redoubling this bond towards other adoptive parents; the child's social relationships are widened; his power of calling upon elders for aid is increased. . . ."[9]

3. Among the Samoans, the family system works "not by increasing the number of parents but by increasing the number of children per responsible parent. Samoa is organized into a series of joint households of ten to twenty people. Over each of these households presides the most responsible male of the group. He stands *in loco parentis* to the entire household of children and adults. The presence of many other adults in the household tends to generalize the children's relationship to the adult world. . . . His father is only one of a group of males, and the headman's place is automatically filled by a successor towards whom the child stands in the same relationship of ward."[10]

4. The primitive family has frequently been called the joint-family. "The family-organization was once a larger as well as a looser structure than it later became. . . . Nothing can bring this primitive type home to the modern mind more forcefully than a reference to the existence and wide extension of the joint-house, or long-house, a structure large enough to hold many families or even a small tribe, with relatively small compartments for married pairs, their children, and their property. . . . In New Guinea, a house is never occupied solely by a man, with wife and children; 'aunts, uncles, and cousins of many removes are included in the family circle.' "[11]

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[8] Margaret Mead, "Contrasts and Comparisons from Primitive Society," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, March 1932, CLX, 23-24.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 27.

[10] *Ibid.*

[11] Sumner and Keller, *The Science of Society*, pp. 1948–49.

5. In prehistoric times, "the woman at the fireside, with the children issued from her body, was the settled part of society and the institutional growth began to form about her and her children—not about the man, who was wandering, unstable, unregulated." [12]

6. For Briffault, the core of the early family also rested in the mother-child relationship. Assuming that the earliest forms of human association had their prototypes in animal assemblages, he finds that the animal family is organized about the maternal instinct, and from these animal groupings the human family evolved. Fundamental to any understanding of the origins of the family for Briffault is the maternal drive, which is the source of the tenderness and affection of which the child is the direct object.[13]

7. We are accustomed to thinking of families organized upon a *conjugal* basis, that is, "consisting of a nucleus of spouses and their offspring surrounded by a fringe of relatives." [14] Considerable mental gymnastics are involved, therefore, in the notion that many families are organized upon a *consanguine* basis, that is, "a nucleus of blood relatives surrounded by a fringe of spouses." [15]

It may be objected that these examples are drawn from primitive societies and have no validity for a study of the "civilized" family. Even among culturally advanced groups, however, the definition of the family as a group composed of husband, wife, and children is not adequate. Our word *family* derives directly from the Latin *familia*, but the composition of the group varies greatly. The patriarchal family of ancient Rome consisted of "all those related by descent through common male ancestors, all persons received into the family by the ceremony of adoption, and even all slaves." [16]

The distinguishing mark of the traditional Chinese family has been the large number of relatives of all degrees living under one roof and sharing the same social and economic existence. As many as five generations may be represented, in addition to servants, slaves, and adopted children. Such a unit is, in turn, a member of a still larger grouping of families, in which there may be hundreds or thousands of members sharing a common name and a common ancestral temple.[17]

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[12] *Ibid.*, p. 1967.

[13] Robert Briffault, *The Mothers*, 3 vols. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1927).

[14] Linton, *The Study of Man*, p. 159.

[15] *Ibid.*

[16] Willystine Goodsell, *A History of Marriage and the Family*, rev. ed. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1934), p. 6.

Some of these same characteristics are to be found in the Polish peasant family. "In the primary and larger sense of the word," say Thomas and Znaniecki, this family "is a social group including all the blood- and law-relatives up to a certain variable limit—usually the fourth degree. The family in the narrower sense, including only the married pair with their children, may be termed the 'marriage-group.' " [18]

What these investigators call the "marriage-group," Murdock would call the nuclear family. He considers this to be a "distinct and strongly functional group in every known society." [19] The larger family units are, from this point of view, variations in the manner in which the nuclear families are affiliated. "A *polygamous family*," he suggests, "consists of two or more nuclear families affiliated by plural marriages, i.e., by having one married parent in common. . . . An *extended family* consists of two or more nuclear families affiliated through an extension of the parent-child relationship rather than of the husband-wife relationship, i.e., by joining the nuclear family of a married adult to that of his parents." [20]

A definition of the family sufficiently broad to cover these examples from primitive, preliterate, historical, and contemporary societies is difficult to make. In his theoretical analysis of society, MacIver offers a definition which approaches universality. "The family," he says, "is a group defined by a sex relationship sufficiently precise and enduring to provide for the procreation and upbringing of children." [21] Certain common characteristics, he continues, are observable in the family throughout human society, even though some may take strange and (to us) bizarre forms. Five of these traits are particularly significant: "(1) a mating relationship, (2) a form of marriage or other institutional relationship in accordance with which the mating relation is established and maintained, (3) a system of nomenclature, involving also a method of reckoning descent, (4) some economic provision shared by the members of the group but having especial reference to the economic needs associated with child-bearing and child-rearing, and generally (5) a common habitation, home, or household, which, however, may not be exclusive to the family group." [22] These related conceptions give considerable insight into the universal human relationships of the family in different societies.

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[17] Ching-Chao Wu, "The Chinese Family," in E. B. Reuter and J. R. Runner, *The Family* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1931), pp. 166 ff. Cf. also Olga Lang, *Chinese Family and Society* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1946).

[18] William I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki, *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*, 2 vol. ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1927), I, 82.

[19] Murdock, *Social Structure*, pp. 2, 3.

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 2. (His italics).

[21] MacIver, *Society*, p. 196.

The Definition of the American Family

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Variability in family forms is not confined to different societies. Within American society, the historical circumstances of an aboriginal population combined with waves of migrants from the Old World and operating in a highly dynamic social situation have resulted in amazing diversity. "Never before in human history," says Ernest W. Burgess, "has any society been composed of so many divergent types of families. Families differ by sections of the country, by communities within the city, by ethnic and religious groups, by economic and social classes, and by vocations. They are different according to the life-cycle and by number and role of family members. They vary by the locus of authority within the family and by widely different styles of life. There are the families of the Hopi Indian (primitive maternal), of the old Amish of Pennsylvania (patriarchal), of the Ozark mountaineers (kinship control), of the Italian immigrant (semipatriarchal), the rooming-house (emancipated), the lower middle class (patricentric), the apartment house (equalitarian) and the suburban (matricentric)." [23]

This wide differentiation in contemporary family forms leads Burgess to the conclusion that the difference between the American family and that of other cultures is a relative rather than an absolute one, and that its distinguishing characteristics are to be found in the realm of *process* rather than *structure*. Elements of process in this respect are such things as modifiability and adaptability, urbanization, secularization, instability, specialization, and trend to companionship of the American family.

It is this variability in family types which may be at the root of the difficulty encountered by the Bureau of the Census in defining precisely what a family is. Students of the family are dependent on this national enumeration for such indispensable information as the number and structure of families; the extent to which the family is broken by death or divorce; the composition of the family in terms of race, ethnic origin, rural or urban residence, and occupation; the family as a consumer unit; and many other such matters. The figures of the Bureau of the Census will be used so frequently in the subsequent discussion that it is important to understand the composition of the group to which they refer.

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[22] *Ibid.*, p. 197.

[23] Ernest W. Burgess, "The Family in a Changing Society," *American Journal of Sociology*, May 1948, LIII, 417.

It was estimated that there were 39,800,000 families in the United States in April, 1951. As defined in this report, a family refers to "a group of two or more persons related by blood, marriage, or adoption and residing together; all such persons are considered as members of one family." [24] In the 1940 reports, however, a family was defined as "the head of the household and all other persons in the household related to the head; heads of households living alone, as well as those living with relatives, were counted as families." In other words, if a comparison were to be made between this sampling estimate of April, 1951 and the census reports for 1940, a revision would have to be made in the latter figure by subtracting more than four million one-person families that were included in the earlier total of approximately 35 million families. Furthermore, the classification, as a family, of blood relatives such as cousins and brothers or sisters living together makes the 1951 statistical definition something quite different from the conventional picture of the family.

In juxtaposition to this quantitative view of the American family may be placed an *analytical* definition. The latter will serve as the context within which the remainder of the present discussion will be placed. The analytical delineation will consider this institutional relationship in functional terms by indicating the principal role of the family in the social structure.[25] The contemporary American family may therefore be defined as *an enduring association of parent (or parents) and offspring whose primary functions are the socialization of the child and the satisfaction of the members' desires for recogni-*

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[24] Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, "Marital Status and Household Characteristics: April 1951," *Population Characteristics*, Series P-20, No. 38, April 29, 1952.

[25] The institutional characteristics of the family will be considered in chaps. 14-15. A detailed analysis of functions will be presented in chaps. 16-17.

tion and response. This description implies that the structural norm is two generations—parent and child—in enduring association comprising the nuclear family.

The objection may be raised that, in some rural areas, it is still customary to build an addition to the home when a son marries, so that he may bring his wife under the family roof. These and other practices once connected with the traditional family are fast disappearing in the transition from a rural to a predominantly urban-oriented society. Another apparent exception to the above definition is the extended family, which still survives in certain immigrant groups. When the second-generation immigrant becomes thoroughly Americanized, however, he tends to accept the two-generational pattern. The varieties in family structure cited by Burgess are very real, but many of them are outside the main stream of American life (viz. the Hopi, the Amish, the Ozark). There is increasing pressure exerted on such groups to conform to the socially accepted nuclear form.

The Primary Functions of the American Family

The importance of the socialization function of the family reflects the contribution of Charles Horton Cooley to the understanding of human nature. For him, human nature was not "something existing separately in the individual, but a *group-nature* or *primary phase of society,* a relatively simple and general condition of the social mind. . . . It is the nature which is developed and expressed in those simple, face-to-face groups that are somewhat alike in all societies; groups of the family, the playground, and the neighborhood." [26] These groups, furthermore, "are fundamental in forming the social nature and ideals of the individual. The result of intimate association . . . is a certain fusion of individualities in a common whole, so that one's very self, for many purposes at least, is the common life and purpose of the group." [27] In this sense, the family is the most important of all human groups.[28]

The social personality of the child thus takes its initial shape in the family. The biological organism, amoral and asocial, is raised to the plane of human nature and made moral and social. The prolongation of human infancy is of basic importance in this process of socialization. During this period, the family provides the social setting within which the ways of the group are handed down. The plasticity of the infant and child is such that he will acquire whatever behavior patterns are presented to him and will incorporate these patterns into his personality. Other forces than the family could theoretically influence the child to as great an extent during the early years, since it is the malleability that counts, rather than any inherent importance of the family. The members of the family are ordinarily the only ones on the ground, so to speak, and the infant perforce adopts the behavior patterns presented by them.

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[26] Cooley, *Social Organization,* pp. 29-30. (His italics.)

[27] *Ibid.,* p. 23.

[28] Cf. Carle C. Zimmerman, "The Family and Social Change," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science,* November 1950, CCLXXII, 28.

Another primary function of the family consists in providing satisfaction for its members' desires for recognition and response. "Every individual," says W. I. Thomas, "has a vast variety of wishes which can be satisfied only by his incorporation in a society." [29] This concept of "wishes" implies that the normal development of the personality involves a constant interaction of the inherent and the social factors. Among the general pattern of wishes regarded as significant by Thomas are (a) the desire for new experience; (b) the desire for security; (c) the desire for response; and (d) the desire for recognition.[30] These are apparently universal characteristics of human beings, and the family environment is an important means for their satisfaction.

In much of his ordinary adult activity, the individual expresses his personality in a segmented fashion. One aspect finds expression in his work or profession; another may be elicited from his social and recreational interests; still another may be called forth in his religious life. In the intimacies of family association, on the other hand, the entire personality is capable of integrated expression and receives responses in terms of the whole rather than its parts. When Burgess and Locke characterize the family as changing "from an institution to a companionship," [31] they stress its contemporary role in providing the means for intimate response.

In terms of the husband and wife this means that conjugal affection, in its mature and best sense, is the *sine qua non* of a successful union. But conjugal affection represents only a partial aspect of the family relationship viewed in terms of response. The need of the young child for the love and affection of his parents is basic to his development as a normal human being. The importance of childhood affection in relation to adult adjustments has often been emphasized in seeking the factors making for successful adaptation to married life.

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[29] Thomas and Znaniecki, *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*, p. 73.

[30] William I. Thomas, *The Unadjusted Girl* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1923) pp. 4 ff.

[31] Ernest W. Burgess and Harvey J. Locke, *The Family* (New York: American Book Company, 1945), p. vii.

The quest for recognition by one's fellows is a universal characteristic of human beings in all societies. In such a highly competitive society as America, individual success must be won by acting in a way that will win the desired approval of those in a position to satisfy this ambition.[32] The young man strives to impress the boss in order to gain advancement. The salesman is careful not to offend the customer. The scientist in his laboratory has his weather eye out for the acceptance of his experiment by his fellow scientists. The group that will supply this recognition may be limited to a very small number, whose approval he will value more than the adulation of millions.

Within the bonds of the family there is a kind of recognition that transcends these forms. The husband may have been thwarted in his quest for recognition from his employer and may have experienced other frustrations in the outside world. But he knows that his wife and children have confidence in his abilities. The wife may be spurned in her ambition to be accepted by an outside group. She may be conscious of certain inadequacies in carrying out her functions as a homemaker. But she does not lack for social appreciation from members of her own family. Although such recognition normally implies a harmonious rapport among members of a family, even the existence of hostility does not fundamentally change this essential characteristic.

What has been said with respect to husband and wife applies with equal force to the relations of children with parents. Granting that there has been too much sentimentalism surrounding the loyalty of a mother to an erring child, nevertheless the situation wherein she remains faithful to the wayward son is too frequent not to point to a truth. In the eyes of society, the boy may have done nothing to justify recognition. His record may have been one of consistent

[32] For a penetrating account of some of the implications of this situation, cf. David Riesman, *The Lonely Crowd* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950).

progression from minor to serious antisocial acts. Even his relations with his mother may have been anything but considerate and loyal. In spite of all this, the family offers him more than his due of social appreciation.

The Related Functions of the American Family

To designate the initial socialization of the child and the satisfaction of the desires for response and recognition as the primary services of the family is not to deny that the family performs other and related functions. The family is still very much of a going concern, even though the functions it performs have changed appreciably in recent decades. Discussion of this subject usually begins with the family as it was a century ago, economically a production and consumption unit, with a proliferation of such functions as the religious, recreational, protective, and educational. The treatment then proceeds to show how, one by one, these functions have been lost to other institutions. The fundamental assumption of such a discussion seems to be that the family of a hundred years ago was the "normal" family and was doing what a family ought to do. Actually, such a family was an adjustment to a predominantly rural society and fitted it admirably. Because of the changes in the social situation the family has undergone many modifications, which do not necessarily represent *loss* but rather *change* in mode of expression.

This confusion between loss and change may be illustrated by reference to the economic function. In a society predominantly agrarian, the primary production of goods and their consumption naturally occupies a prominent position. Economic cooperation takes the form of a division of labor among the family members who carry on the essential activities of a home and farm. When society becomes urban and industrial, with its emphasis on the money-nexus, economic cooperation changes from the production of goods to the earning of money and the family becomes almost entirely a consumption unit.

The number of wives combining homework with working for wages has thus shown a steady increase in recent decades, both in absolute numbers and in the proportion of all female workers who are married. In 1920, of the female gainful workers 14 years of age and older, 23 per cent were married. In 1940, of the employed females 14 years old and older, 37 per cent were married, whereas by

1950 this figure had increased to 52 per cent.[33] This phenomenal increase in the proportion of married women in the labor force points to economic cooperation in the family in the matter of earning money income. It also indicates that "the two-family income is becoming increasingly a necessity as the cost of living rises, and as people learn the importance of better standards of nutrition, health, education, and leisure activities." [34]

Another function of the family is that of reproduction. Strictly speaking, this function is discharged only when the membership of the family is completed, if we define the family in terms of parents and offspring. Logically, a married pair is only a potential family. In popular thought, however, marriage and the family are so inextricably intertwined that to distinguish sharply between a potential and a completed family is more confusing than clarifying. Hence it may be said that society looks to the family for the biological perpetuation of the group. Whatever the complexity of reasons may be, modern Europe has witnessed a growth of state programs to stimulate the birth rate by cash bonuses for children, marriage loans, taxes on bachelors, family allowance schemes, preferential treatment for parents, and other devices.

American society has not had recourse to any such programs. There are, nevertheless, unconscious devices in all societies that place the stamp of approval on parenthood. Art, literature, and public opinion unite in praise of maternity. The "normal" woman is one who desires and bears children.[35] There is a "pathos, or feeling aspect, to our family mores which is expressed as a continuous support of parental roles. We feel differently about people after they are married, and our feelings change again after they become parents." [36] On the reverse side, there is implicit condemnation of the increasing proportion of childless married couples, particularly where this condition seems to be the result of an individualistic, hedonistic philosophy of life. There is only sympathy when such childlessness is due to biological or other inadequacy. In any event, society is deeply concerned about the adequacy with which its family members perform the function of reproduction.

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[33] Bureau of the Census, Sixteenth Census of the United States, Population, Vol. III, *The Labor Force, Part I, United States Summary*, 1943, pp. 22 ff. Bureau of the Census, "Marital and Family Characteristics of the Labor Force in the United States: March, 1950," *Current Population Reports, Labor Force*, Series P-50, No. 29, May 2, 1951.

[34] American Council on Education, *Women in the Defense Decade*, ed. Raymond F. Howes, Vol. XVI, No. 52, Series I, p. 32, April 1952.

[35] Leta S. Hollingsworth, "Social Devices for Impelling Women to Bear and Rear Children," *American Journal of Sociology*, July 1916, XXII, 19-29.

[36] Willard Waller, *The Family*, rev. by Reuben Hill (New York: The Dryden Press, 1951), p. 387.

Another service performed by the family is that of providing an agency for the orderly transmission of property.[37] The Marxists have made much of the association of the family with property. Friedrich Engels thought he had found a causal relationship between the development of private property and the origins of the family.[38] One need have no intellectual kinship with this point of view to admit that in social evolution the connections between property and the family have been omnipresent. Bride price, dower, dowry, entail, primogeniture, property concepts associated with virginity and adultery—these are only a few of the property notions traditionally connected with the family.

Many of these property connotations have today only historical or, at most, symbolic significance. The family is still, however, the unit for the transmission of property. All the states provide by law that children shall share equally in inheritance, regardless of age or sex. In all the United States except Louisiana, the parent may disinherit the child. Equality among heirs is further protected by statutes which provide that a child's share on the death of the parent shall be decreased by the amount he received as advancement during the latter's lifetime. The maze of laws covering the rights of husband and wife, of widow and widower, of personal and communal property, the provisions concerning dower, curtesy, and inheritance all witness the contemporary reality of the association between property and the family.[39]

Another subsidiary function of the contemporary family is that of status-giving. Status-giving means simply the designation of the relationship the individual will have to other individuals within and without the family group. The sociologist uses the term *status* in association with the concept of *role*. The former is concerned with the position of the individual in society; the latter refers to the activities of the individual in relation to the various groups of which he is a member.[40]

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[37] Sumner and Keller, *The Science of Society*, III, 1527.

[38] Friedrich Engels, *The Origin of the Family* (Chicago: C. H. Kerr and Company, 1902).

[39] Chester G. Vernier, *American Family Laws* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1935–36), Vol. III, especially secs. 188, 215, 227; also IV, 112 ff.

Nothing places this aspect of status-giving in sharper perspective than to look at it from the negative point of view. The traditional stigma attached to the child born out of wedlock was taken over by American society from the English Common Law. "The 'Bastard,' the term applied to the illegitimate child in English law for many centuries, is described as *filius nullius*—nobody's child—and this designation clearly describes his status. . . ." [41] The handicaps under which the illegitimate child still labors are numerous and severe. The embarrassment when securing a work certificate, the telltale evidence of the birth record, and the difficulties in connection with school adjustments are all ways in which the inferior status of such a child may deleteriously affect his adult personality.

The status-giving function of the family is not restricted to the child. James H. S. Bossard shows clearly how marriage itself is an avenue for the achievement of status. "To marry is to gain status in your family. . . . Who has not sensed the uncertainty and even anxiety in many families when the children pass a given year and remain unmarried?" [42] Bossard then points out how marriage aids in achieving status with respect to the job or profession, as well as in the community. In conclusion, he indicates that "A community is, from one point of view, a confederation of families. . . . To be married is to be admitted into this confederation. . . ." [43]

The Family and Social Class

The treatment in this book will be largely concerned with the middle-class, white, native-born, urban family. This does not mean that the Negro,[44] the foreign-born,[45] and the rural family [46] do not bulk numerically large in the total picture. There are unique familial

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[40] W. H. R. Rivers, *Social Organization* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1924), pp. 37-38.

[41] Willystine Goodsell, *Problems of the Family*, rev. ed. (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1936), p. 358.

[42] James H. S. Bossard, "Marriage as a Status-Achieving Device," *Sociology and Social Research*, September-October, 1944, XXIX, 6.

[43] *Ibid.*, p. 7.

[44] E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro Family in the United States*, rev. and abr. ed. (New York: The Dryden Press, 1948).

[45] Thomas and Znaniecki, *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America.*

[46] Burgess and Locke, *The Family*, chap. 3, "The Rural Family."

characteristics of such segments of the population that merit the kind of special treatment to be found elsewhere. On the other hand, the forces making for cultural uniformity tend to impinge upon these groups in such a way as to bring their ways into increasing agreement with the predominant patterns of our society.

The growth of urbanization has decreased the former differentiation between urban and rural types of thought and action. Most foreign-born families in recent decades have come from peasant cultures, where the tradition of large families is strong. This tradition was initially perpetuated by foreign-born parents in this country, but later generations have assimilated the American pattern of small families, with a resultant decline in the birth rate.[47]

Traditionally, American society has had a middle-class ideology. The early English settlers who placed the stamp of Anglo-Saxon culture upon the colonies were primarily middle-class in origin, despite the grandiloquent claims of certain contemporary descendants to the contrary. The men and women who settled the early colonies brought with them the outlook of the rising middle class. Protestant in religion, individualistic in outlook, concerned with freedom of enterprise as much as freedom of religion, the colonists founded a middle-class society in the wilderness. The conditions under which the nation developed intensified and firmly riveted this middle-class point of view upon American culture. Terms like *the hereditary aristocracy, the proletariat,* and *the peasantry* have never corresponded to social reality in the New World.

A class has been defined, in subjective terms, as a group of persons who *think alike* on certain broad common problems, no matter what their economic situation, occupation, power, prestige, or social background may be. In this sense, there is something to be said for the contention that the majority of Americans belong to the middle class. A representative sample of Americans were asked in 1940, by one of the national public opinion organizations, to what class they belonged. When the choice was restricted to three groupings (upper, middle, and lower), 79.2 per cent indicated that they regarded themselves as middle-class, 7.6 per cent as upper-class, 7.9 per cent as lower-class, and 5.3 per cent said they didn't know. The individuals represented in the sample were then classified into categories representative of their actual economic status. Of those who were actually poor, 70.3 per cent said they belonged to the middle class. Of those who were actually prosperous, 23.6 per cent placed themselves in the upper class, and 74.7 per cent regarded themselves as middle-class.[48]

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[47] Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, "Birth-Rates among Foreign-Born No Longer above Average," *Statistical Bulletin,* November 1944.

At approximately the same time, the National Resources Board found that 87 per cent of the families in the United States received a total annual income of less than $2,500.[49] This money income of $2,500 may provisionally be regarded, for that time, as an objective criterion for middle-class membership. It then follows that only 13 per cent of families were able to purchase a "middle-class level" of goods and services, in contrast to the 79.2 per cent who considered themselves in this class.

This general conclusion has not gone unchallenged. On the basis of subjective criteria (feeling of belongingness) Richard Centers arrived at different conclusions by the use of a series of categories different from those of upper, middle, and lower classes.[50] In 1945, he asked the following question of a representative section of white males: "If you were asked to use one of these four names for your social class, which would you say you belonged in: the middle class, lower class, working class or upper class?" [51] Fifty-one per cent indicated membership in the working class, 43 per cent in the middle class, 3 per cent in the upper class, and only 1 per cent in the lower class.[52]

One can only speculate as to the possible results of a similar poll using the categories of W. Lloyd Warner and associates. These scholars regard the class divisions of a modern community as made up of: (1) upper-upper class; (2) lower-upper class; (3) upper-middle class; (4) lower-middle class; (5) upper-lower class; (6) lower-lower class.[53] It is a reasonable assumption that a substantial majority would place themselves in the two brackets of the middle class, rather than in the other four subdivisions.

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[48] "The People of the U.S.A.—A Self-Portrait," *Fortune*, February 1940, pp. 14, 28 ff.

[49] National Resources Committee, *Consumer Incomes in the United States* (Washington, 1938), pp. 2-3.

[50] Richard Centers, *The Psychology of Social Classes* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949).

[51] *Ibid.*, p. 76.

[52] *Ibid.*, p. 77.

[53] W. Lloyd Warner and Paul S. Lunt, *The Status System of a Modern Community* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1942), chap. 1, "The Status System of Yankee City."

The American people consider themselves primarily middle class. Their attitudes reflect the classless ideology of the American ethos, and they hope for upward mobility for themselves or their children. There is no question of the existence of these expectations of vertical mobility, although there *is* considerable question as to their realization.[54] At the same time that a considerable majority of the American people have attitudes of middle-class participation, however, their actual behavior tends to set them off from each other, in certain rather definite respects,[55] into several large groups. These behavior differences comprise such elements as attitudes toward spending and saving, patterns of sexual behavior, eating and sleeping arrangements, permissive treatment of children, forms of punishment, feeding-practices, bowel- and bladder-training, roles of family members, attitudes toward family limitation, and many other elements related to marriage and the family.[56]

We therefore have a system of social stratification in this country that has implications on two levels. On the *ideological* level, the majority of persons associate themselves with the middle class, with its attendant hopes and aspirations for social mobility. On the *behavior* level, the population of the United States live in terms of different patterns, which arise from the differences in their way of life. The structure of the personalities of each social level reflects these differences in their way of life, with the several status groups bringing out certain internally consistent behavior patterns in the adult and child.[57]

It is true, of course, that the pattern of American culture has a dominant over-all impact upon the personality, so that the similarities between the participants in this larger pattern are greater than their differences. Nevertheless, the latter are significant aspects of American culture, and an understanding of these subcultural patterns is necessary to a complete understanding of the American family. In the discussion that follows, therefore, we shall consider both these related themes, namely, the broad cultural similarities and the subcultural differences in the American family.[58]

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[54] Gideon Sjoberg, "Are Social Classes in America Becoming More Rigid?" *American Sociological Review*, December 1951, XVI, 775-83.

[55] Allison Davis, "American Status Systems and the Socialization of the Child," *American Sociological Review*, June 1941, VI, 345-54.

[56] Robert J. Havighurst, "Social Class Differences and Family Life Education at the Secondary Level," *Marriage and Family Living*, Fall 1950, XII, 133-135.

[57] Robert J. Havighurst, "Social Class and Personality Structure," *Sociology and Social Research*, July-August 1952, XXXVI, 355-63.

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[58] Cf. John Sirjamaki, "Culture Configurations in the American Family," *American Journal of Sociology*, May 1948, LIII, 464-70.

2

THE FAMILY AND AMERICAN CULTURE

"FROM THE BEGINNINGS of culture," says a noted student of the family, "there has been an intimate web of inter-relationships between the family and other institutions because the persons who make up the family are also participants in the economic, religious, and other social activities of a community. Never," he continues, "has the family lived alone. The family as an isolated institution is as unrealistic as the individual economic man of the classical economists and the abstract ego of the Freudian man." [1] This book is based upon such a conception of the family. The society in which the family operates and the culture in terms of which its members think and act are together fundamental to any understanding of this central institution. The first section will therefore delineate some of the broad aspects of the culture pattern of the United States, without which the subsequent facts about the structure, functions, and relationships of the American family would be considerably less meaningful.

The Nature of Culture

We may first review briefly some of the pertinent aspects of culture and the cultural point of view, with special reference to marriage and the family. Culture denotes the sum total of the "way of life" of a people. According to E. B. Tylor's classic definition, culture is "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities acquired by man as a member of society." [2]

This is a somewhat static picture. The dynamic elements include the notion that culture is the total social heritage of a people, modified by those who are presently the bearers of that heritage. Every child born into an American family becomes the heir of countless generations of human beings who, in association, have worked out adjustments to the universe. In the varied forms of material tools and artifacts, scientific laws, and ideas and ideologies in philosophy and religion, these adjustments are cumulative. Newton acknowledged his obligation to his scientific predecessors when he said that if he saw farther than other men it was because he stood on the shoulders of giants. The human species is distinguished from all lower forms by the fact that it stands at birth not only on the shoulders of giants, but also at the apex of the gigantic pyramid of man's collective achievements.

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[1] Bernhard J. Stern, "The Family and Cultural Change," *American Sociological Review*, April 1939, IV, 199.

[2] Edward B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, 7th ed., (New York: Brentano's, 1924), p. 1.

Contemporary American culture is the product of a social process whose roots go down into a past so far removed that its precise origins will never be delineated. It is a short-sighted view to regard our scientific achievements as having a history of a few hundred years, our religious forms a background of mere centuries, our technological successes a matter of decades. The taming of fire, the domestication of plants and animals, the creation of norms of justice, and the delineation of right and wrong are only a few of the indispensable adjuncts of our culture, the origins of which are hidden from one who would give them exact dating. Each generation makes use of the social heritage and in so doing makes changes therein. An invention of a new food, a new philosophy, a new scientific law, or a new atomic bomb is a contemporary addition to culture, even though it is nothing more than a new combination of previously known elements.

Culture is not a superorganic entity, with an independent existence. Culture never does anything; therefore, Haring suggests that it is more accurate to speak of *cultural behavior*, for it is a fallacy to make "culture" the subject of an active verb.[3] Culture exists only in and through individual minds. It can be understood only as individuals agree on the meaning of its parts. It is changed by individuals. There are indeed two sets of cultural realities—the "inner" and the "outer"—so interwoven that to separate them and consider each independently is nothing but a pleasant intellectual exercise.

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[3] Douglas G. Haring, "Is 'Culture' Definable?" *American Sociological Review*, February 1949, XIV, 29.

The "inner" series of cultural realities comprises the ideas, beliefs, attitudes, and values that people share in their handling of the "outer" series, which are the external embodiments in law, art, science, material artifacts, and religious, educational, political, and economic institutions. A photoelectric cell, an immanent deity, cubistic art—these have one set of meanings (and uses) for a twentieth century American. They would have an entirely different, and doubtless very strange, set of meanings (and uses) for a Central Australian tribesman.

Any given culture also presents a constellation or configuration of parts, rather than a sum of separate beliefs, laws, material tools, and institutions. A culture is a complex whole, characterized by integration and interdependence. The term of Sumner, "a strain toward consistency" [4] in the mores, emphasizes this interrelationship of the parts of the whole. The interdependence of the different aspects of a cultural configuration is at the basis of Ogburn's study of social change and his use of the abstraction, "cultural lag." [5] A change in one area of a given culture (for example, the introduction of the automobile) gives rise to the necessity for adaptation in other areas (laws, engineering, folkways). Of necessity there will be a time interval, or lag, between the appearance of the new invention and the cultural adaptations that must be made to it.

"A culture, like an individual," suggests Ruth Benedict, "is a more or less consistent pattern of thought and action. Within each culture there come into being characteristic purposes not necessarily shared by other types of society. In obedience to these purposes, each people further and further consolidates its experience. . . . The form that these acts take we can understand only by understanding first the emotional and intellectual mainsprings of that society." [6] All of the varied and miscellaneous activities comprising the processes of making a living, raising a family, governing one another, worshiping the deity, and other important aspects of life are fitted into the cultural pattern that develops within the society. The simpler societies maintain the integrity of their pattern with greater ease than the more complex ones. The culture of the New England Puritans was a more consistent pattern than that of contemporary Boston. Within the larger framework, the culture pattern of Greater Boston has certain basic presuppositions that determine much of the behavior of the people therein—whether Back Bay Yankee, Irish, or Italian. The common elements of this pattern are those held by the rest of the inheritors of the American heritage.[7]

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[4] William Graham Sumner and Albert G. Keller, *The Science of Society* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1929), I, 37.

[5] William F. Ogburn, *Social Change*, rev. ed. (New York: The Viking Press, 1950).

[6] Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture* (New York: Penguin Books, Inc., 1946), p. 42.

Each culture selects certain traits that are emphasized above others. Some cultures select ceremony as the primary consideration and spend their days in endless elaborate exercises about which the whole of group life is centered. Others emphasize religion to the virtual exclusion of other values, and considerations of the afterworld therefore dominate the affairs of this world. Other cultures glorify warfare. The warrior is the folk hero, and combat is the most honorable activity possible to man. Still other cultures, like our own, place an inordinate emphasis upon pecuniary acquisition and define success or failure largely in these terms.

The individual attempts to adjust his behavior to the prevailing norms of his culture and in so doing unconsciously molds his conduct to conform with its patterns. Those temperamentally or otherwise suited to conform to the patterns of behavior prescribed by their culture will tend to be successful, whereas those unable to conform will by definition be failures. The fullest honors of a culture are offered to those best able to exemplify the peculiar values stressed therein. To conform is thus to succeed.[8]

The Nature of Sub-Cultures

Any given culture is integrated and tends toward uniformity, but there are also segments within a culture whose thoughtways differ from the predominant characteristics of the pattern. Winch defines a sub-culture as "the cultural traits characteristic of a social class or other reasonably homogeneous group or aggregate within a society." [9]

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[7] One of the most stimulating analyses of the conflicts and contradictions of American culture is given in Robert S. Lynd, *Knowledge for What?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1939), chap. 3, "The Pattern of American Culture." See also Bernard Iddings Bell, *Crowd Culture* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1952).

[8] Benedict, *Patterns of Culture*, chap. 8.

[9] Robert F. Winch, *The Modern Family* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1952), p. 9 fn.

The Ozark mountaineers and the Amish of Pennsylvania might be considered rural sub-cultures, as the Chinatowns and the Little Italies of our large metropolitan centers are urban sub-cultures. In an earlier day, the regional differentials between colonial New England and the South could be regarded as sub-cultures, although in our time such variations are not so pronounced. From one point of view, the Negro population might be looked upon as possessing a sub-culture, even though this distinction was more true of the ante-bellum Negro than of modern Negro society.

The notion of sub-cultures has, however, been largely confined to the recent studies of social stratification in American society and the term has therefore become roughly synonymous with class differentials.[10] This relationship has been stated as follows: "The position of different groups in the social structure also means that they will develop certain group attitudes, behavior patterns, and ideologies. In this sense, the society of the United States is a 'class-organized' society, whether we are willing to admit it or not. . . . Each of these classes . . . has its own sub-culture, with many elements distinguishing the subcultures from each other and from the mass culture as a whole." [11]

The elite or upper class is composed, in the main, of those families enjoying an annual income of $10,000 or more. Possessed of wealth, they exercise great power in matters of economic and political policies, even though they do not participate directly in government service. Traditions of "family" and family background still remain strong, even though the *nouveaux riches* and late-comers to this country have found their way into this group in increasing numbers.

The chief emphasis of the middle class seems to be to climb the ladder, both financially and socially. Formal education is highly prized, since it is regarded as a means to these ends. Personal or individual achievement is regarded as not only possible but imperative. Members of this group tend to be conservative in politics. This conservatism carries over into such things as training the child to conform to the accepted conventional standards, even though this process involves considerable repression.

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[10] W. Lloyd Warner and Paul S. Lunt, *The Social Life of a Modern Community* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1941). See also W. Lloyd Warner, Marchia Meeker, and Kenneth Eells, *Social Class in America* (Chicago: Science Research Associates, 1949).

[11] Francis E. Merrill and H. Wentworth Eldredge, *Culture and Society* (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1952), p. 280.

As opposed to this general point of view, the mothers of the working class tend to let their children "just grow." If an annual income of $2,500 (1949) be arbitrarily considered as the dividing line between the middle and working classes (that is, sub-cultures), then more than one-third of the families in the nation belong in this latter group. Attitudes may be said to derive from relative economic insecurity, and hence they believe not so much in the possibilities of individual achievement through individual initiative but rather the improvement in group status through collective action. This does not imply any revolutionary class-consciousness of the European variety, since the American scene has presented many evidences of vertical mobility, both past and present. Associated with the lack of economic security of the working-class, there is often less value placed upon thrift and planning than is the case with the middle class.[12]

Subcultural differences are evident in a variety of relationships connected directly or indirectly with the family. Hollingshead arrives at certain tentative generalizations concerning the relationship between family stability and the status structure. The established families of the upper class tend to exert considerable control over the marriage choices of their young men and women. This is only one evidence of the powerful control such families, together with the kin group, exert over the behavior of their members to have them conform to the social position of these economically secure units. The *new* families of the upper class do not have the extended kin group to insure stability. This factor, together with the pressure to move into the circle of old families, leads to greater family instability.

In the middle classes, there is a relatively high degree of stability. It might seem that, because of the vertical and horizontal mobility characterizing these groups, unstable conditions would result. The forces opposing these tendencies—the emphasis on success, the high value placed upon college and university education, and the demands for self-discipline believed essential to attain economic security—are powerful enough to promote stable relationships. For the working classes, it is probable that the condition of relative economic insecurity has a great bearing on the matter of instability, although future studies may reveal that other factors are equally important.

[12] *Ibid.*, chap. 14.

For the lower classes, crowded and substandard housing, the impact of economic crises, and the danger of unemployment are situations leading to a greater amount of instability than is to be found in any other class.[13]

Perhaps the most striking result of the Kinsey study was the confirmation of the reality of class differences in American society on the basis of the dissimilar sexual behavior patterns of "upper-level" and "lower-level" groups. These levels were delineated on the basis of the amount of formal schooling completed by the individual and also by the occupation of the individual and his parents. Inasmuch as such a small proportion of the population is usually classified as upper class, Kinsey's "upper-level" group includes a large proportion of the middle class. The "lower-level" category embraces many persons classified by Warner as lower-middle class. Marked differences are observed between these social levels in such matters as frequency of premarital intercourse, attitudes towards virginity, definitions of perversions, practices with respect to petting, and evaluations placed on marital fidelity.[14]

Culture and The Family

This brief discussion of variations in the behavior patterns and value systems found in sub-cultures brings into sharper focus the larger culture of which these variants are parts. A complete understanding of the family depends upon viewing it in relation to its total cultural setting. The prior treatment of culture—its continuity and cumulative nature, its composition of "inner" and "outer" realities, and the interdependence of its parts—is an indispensable prerequisite for an understanding of the family. The basic human needs that have given rise to the family in any society are universal. The forms which the concrete expressions of these needs will take are as variable as society itself. The relationship of culture to the study of the family may be further illustrated by an example drawn from each of the following: the functions, the forms, and the "problems" of the family.

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[13] August B. Hollingshead, "Class Differences in Family Stability," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, November 1950, CCLXXII, 39-46. For an excellent discussion of the differences between social classes in the matter of child-rearing, cf. Allison Davis and Robert J. Havighurst, "Social Class and Color Differences in Child-Rearing," *American Sociological Review*, December 1946, XI, 698-710.

[14] Alfred C. Kinsey, Wardell B. Pomeroy, and Clyde E. Martin, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Co., 1948).

1. *Culture and Family Functions.* The family as an institution serves the following general purposes: the socialization of the child, the satisfaction of the individual's wishes for recognition and response, economic cooperation, reproduction, the transmission of property, and the inheritance of status. These are such basic needs that every society has found in the family a means for satisfying them. But the relative importance of each of these functions depends on the total cultural configuration. In contemporary American society, the primary functions of the family are the socialization of the child and the satisfaction of the individual's wishes for recognition and response. Economic cooperation occupies a secondary position.

In other societies, however, the economic aspects of the family assume a primary position. As Sumner and Keller point out, "the Australian needs a wife for a comfortable life, as a beast of burden, a food producer. . . . In Melanesia, the wife's usefulness in field-labors and the like weighs much more heavily in the scale than her personal attractiveness. . . . In choosing a wife, the Greenlander pays no heed to love or to beauty in the bride or even to what little property she may bring; 'far more decisive in the suitor's choice is skill in housekeeping.' "[15]

2. *Culture and Family Forms.* Just as the characteristics of the culture are reflected in the functions assigned to the family, so are they mirrored in the form which the family takes. The location of family authority is a case in point. The theoretical possibilities for the locus of this authority are: (a) in the mother, (b) in the father, (c) in a division of authority between mother and father, and (d) in the child (or children). Each of these abstract situations, with the exception of the last named, calls to mind specific instances of cultures in which it is the prevalent form. The work of Briffault has established that the mother occupied a position of superior power and authority in earliest societies, quite apart from the vexed question of the existence of the "pure" matriarchate.

As a result of far-reaching social changes, among which may well have been the evolution of differing forms of property, the center of family authority shifted from the mother to the father. In the classical world and throughout most of the history of the Western world, supreme power was vested in the father. Recent democratic changes in the social structure have brought about a new and equalitarian family in which there is a division of authority between father and mother. In spite of the increasing concern with the child, it is difficult to conceive even abstractly of the family operating successfully on the basis of authority vested in its immature members, just as it is not possible to conceive of social changes that would effect such a revolution in the status of the child.

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[15] Sumner and Keller, *The Science of Society,* III 1506-7.

3. *Culture and Family Problems.* The study of the family in its cultural configuration serves likewise to place in new perspective many of the "problems" of the family. There has been much discussion in recent years of the rising number of divorces in American society. Many of these discussions view divorce as an "evil" to be attacked as though it were an isolated phenomenon. One group would solve the problem by drafting more stringent divorce legislation, unaware that, along with the liberalization of divorce codes, there have developed restrictive tendencies as evidenced by the number of states now providing for the interlocutory decree.[16] Another group advocates a Federal uniform divorce law. Others propose a return to the former ecclesiastical ban on all divorces. Still others realize that divorce is merely a recognition by society that a given marriage has failed, and they would initiate more adequate preventive measures. These latter proposals would guard the entrance to marriage by more uniform and stringent laws and by education for marriage, so that this important venture might be undertaken with more understanding.

However well-intentioned they may be, all of these groups have a restricted view of divorce. In one way or another, they fail to regard divorce in the total matrix of American society. They want to remedy the "divorce evil" without considering the complex factors involved and all the possible consequences of their actions. Those who would adopt measures aimed at *preventing* marital breakdown come nearest to an understanding of the real reasons for divorce. Only when divorce is viewed as an inevitable corollary of its total social setting can a true understanding of the problem become possible and the way opened for its intelligent resolution.

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[16] Mabel A. Elliott, "Divorce Legislation and Family Instability," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, November 1950, CCLXXII, 134-37.

In a society in which religious values were preëminent and marriage was defined as a sacramental and indissoluble relationship, there would clearly be no divorce, quite apart from the relative degree of marital happiness. When secular considerations replace religious ones, the result is a rising threshold of tolerance for divorce. When a society emphasizes the companionship goals of marriage as opposed to its institutional nature, there will be a franker recognition of the failure of a given marriage to satisfy the needs for companionship. When individual happiness becomes a primary cultural expectation, the number of individuals who regard themselves as frustrated in this quest will naturally increase. As we shall see in a subsequent chapter, the extreme cult of romance in American society inevitably leads to a growing proportion of disillusioned marriages. Thus it can be seen that the more adequate the knowledge of so-called family "problems" in terms of the total cultural milieu, the more possibility will there be for intelligent understanding and control.

Culture and the American Ethos

The central thesis of this book is that those elements which have produced our culture have been those which molded the characteristics of the family. A complete picture of all the factors creating American culture would obviously include a social history of the past 300 years, plus a comprehensive survey of the cultural heritage of those who came to the New World. To state the matter thus is to renounce any claim to such omniscience. This discussion will attempt merely to delineate the most striking aspects of American life that have been derived from the past and have been so modified as to constitute a unique pattern of culture.

The concept of ethos has found its way into general sociological usage to signify those characteristics of a society that differentiate it from all others. In the following analysis, the primary emphasis will be placed on the "inner" series of realities, the collective values and beliefs. These "inner" series find their material embodiment in schools, churches, business institutions, and innumerable other "outer" manifestations of culture.[17]

American society began as an outpost of Europe. Both the United States and Europe have, therefore, a common social heritage extend-

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[17] For a brilliant exposition of the history of these ideas, cf. Crane Brinton, *Ideas and Men* (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1950).

ing back to the Mediterranean culture, which in turn was a synthesis of preceding cultural achievements. The unprecedented advances in the conquest of nature in the past four centuries have placed these two areas in the most intimate contact, so that it is possible to speak of Euro-American culture. It is an interesting commentary on the power of modern nationalism that two World Wars within fifty years have had their beginnings as struggles between segments of the Western world having the same cultural foundations. In their zeal to embark on a new order which would determine the destiny of the world "for a thousand years," the Nazi ideologists proclaimed that they would break, once and for all time, the chains that bound them to the culture derived by the West from the Mediterranean heritage. They defined these "chains" as: Judaic-Christian influences, Roman law, and the foundations of political democracy.[18]

The present world ideological struggle between the Soviet totalitarian regime and the democratic West is of a somewhat different nature. Russia was so long outside the main stream of Western culture that the divergent thoughtways make communicative understanding exceedingly difficult. Words like *democracy, compromise,* and similar terms mean different things to the two worlds. In the struggle against both the Nazi and the Soviet totalitarianisms, however, the complete subordination of the individual to the State is at the core of the conflict. In our own world, the dignity of the individual has ever been of paramount consideration. So important is this concept of individualism that the student will find it as a persistent thread running through both the warp and woof of the subsequent discussion of American marital and family life.

The Judaic-Christian Heritage and the American Ethos

American society has always been permeated with that complex of attitudes, beliefs, and values derived from historical Christianity. To say that this religious emphasis has been in evidence from the beginning is not to succumb to the popular fallacy that all those who came to the New World in the earliest days came seeking freedom of religious worship and belief. Among other motives leading to the determination to migrate were the desire for economic improvement, adventure, freedom from debtor's prison, and escape from political intolerance.

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[18] Aurel Kolnai, *The War against the West* (New York: The Viking Press, 1938).

The forms of the expression of Christian values have been modified over the centuries in terms of the changing patterns of society. As Simkhovitch pointed out [19] some years ago, to understand the fundamental ethics of Jesus one must consider the simple agrarian background of a small segment of the ancient world located at the crossroads of ancient empires. It is not possible rigidly to apply the ethical norms of such a simple, primary-group agrarian society to the highly complex, impersonal, mechanized, and industrial society of the present time.

This basic cultural truth may have led Troeltsch [20] to speak of the nice adaptation which Christianity, through the organized Church, made to the predominantly agrarian pattern of the medieval world. The hierarchy of fixed estates, the personal relationships, the emphasis on fealty, loyalty, reverence, and mutual agreement, the concrete rather than the abstract approach to justice and right conduct—these essentially Christian values thrive best in a familistic, agrarian setting.

When a predominantly feudal and agrarian society gave way first to a middle-class commercial and then to an industrial society, this change was accompanied by a radical transformation in the outlook of Christendom. This transformation was known as Protestantism. Whether the new world view of Protestantism gave rise to a new middle-class capitalistic mentality or whether it merely rationalized these social and economic changes [21] makes little appreciable difference. The social changes and the religious revolution can be regarded as interrelated aspects of the total situation.

To say that this is a Christian nation is not to imply the ethnocentric belief that the American people put into practice the high ethical ideals embodied in Christianity to such an extent as to set them apart from other peoples. Most human beings exhibit a wide gap between their professed beliefs and their actual practices. The high idealism of the Sermon on the Mount, the Beatitudes, the commandments of love to God and love to the brethren—these are still collective beliefs of the American people, however far removed their behavior may be from attaining such idealism.

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[19] Vladimir G. Simkhovitch, *Toward the Understanding of Jesus* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1921).

[20] Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, 2 vols. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1931), I, 249 ff.

[21] Richard H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (London: Pelican Books, 1938).

This dedication to Christianity has emphasized the tenet that places the individual at the apex of all social values. Other types of secular thinking have also emphasized the importance of the individual. Christianity, however, has stressed such a spiritual elevation of the individual man that there is a reverence for the human personality found nowhere else. Traditional Protestantism also released the individual from his previous submergence in the institutionalized structure of the Church.

Nowhere is this opposition set forth more vividly than in Martin Luther's great Reformation treatises. "A Christian man is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian man is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all." [22] In the New World, untrammeled by the traditions of the past, it was possible for the individual priesthood of the believer to come to at least partial expression. The appearance of more than two hundred separate denominations and sects on the American religious stage bears testimony to the Protestant emphasis on the right of the individual to interpret religious truth in his own way.

Religion and religious values have thus played a dominant role in the development of American society. The family has been greatly affected by this religious emphasis. The influence will become more apparent in the next chapter, when attention will be directed to the religious source of our present beliefs on divorce, sex mores, marriage as a civil contract, the status of woman, and the importance of the child.

Government by Law and the American Ethos

The heritage of belief in government by laws, not by men, is also a part of the American ethos. There is something almost naïve in our belief in the efficacy of a law. There appears to be unbounded confidence that one's neighbors can be successfully legislated into the Kingdom of Heaven. This belief persists in spite of repeated failures. As indicated above, many people would curb the rising number of divorces by making the legal grounds more stringent. To believe that a law like that of New York State (which recognizes only adultery as a legal ground for absolute divorce) will reduce the divorce rate in that jurisdiction is to place too much confidence in legal power. Such a law tends to drive individuals seeking absolute divorce either to meccas like Reno or to the manufacture of evidence proving adultery.

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[22] "A Treatise on Christian Liberty," *Works of Martin Luther* (Philadelphia: A. J. Holman and Company, 1915), II, 312.

These illustrations point to a paradox. Alongside of this belief in the omnipotence of law, there has developed in this country a corollary tradition of reckless disregard of the law. This lawlessness was also an outgrowth of American life-conditions.[23] Early colonial experience was such that the settlers felt that the government in England had a complete lack of understanding of their real needs and welfare. This condition was unavoidable, owing to the distances and the relatively slow means of communication. The rationalization arose that laws enacted by such an absentee government could be safely ignored if they transgressed the alleged well-being of the ruled. Similar conditions were faced on the continually moving western frontier, except that the offender in these instances was the distant government in the nation's capital. Added to this situation was the rapid economic growth during the nineteenth century, which gave rise to the belief that anything promoting the material progress of the country was a moral as well as a patriotic virtue, regardless of any accompanying disregard of the law.

Examples of the impingement of the tradition of lawlessness upon the family are numerous. Collusion and connivance are sufficient grounds on which a judge may refuse to entertain a motion for divorce. Nevertheless, sufficiently technical interpretations of these principles have grown up so that the average judge can have an easy conscience that he has maintained the letter of the law, even though its spirit and intent have been successfully by-passed. Although the Federal laws, commonly called the Comstock laws, banning contraceptive literature and devices from the mails, are still in full effect, they have been so attenuated by public practice and court decisions that they are violated with impunity. The state of Massachusetts through its highest court has upheld a rigid anti-contraceptive law. He would be a bold person, indeed, who would maintain that the residents of this state abide faithfully by such a law.

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[23] See James Truslow Adams, *The Epic of America* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1931); also Vernon L. Parrington, *Main Currents in American Thought*, 3 vols. (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1927–30).

In spite of this contradiction between lawlessness and the belief in a government of laws, it still remains true that the American has an ingrained respect for legal processes. However wide the gap between principle and practice, the doctrine of equality before the law is accepted as an integral part of the American way. Even though the impartial scales of justice may actually be heavily weighted in favor of power, position, money, or prestige, the average citizen is moved to strong protests over the failure of an individual to get a fair trial before a jury of his peers. The first principle in social reform is thus resort to law, as the organized, formal expression of the will of the group.

Political Democracy and the American Ethos

Political democracy is another important constituent of the American ethos, within the framework of which we are considering the American family. This is not to imply that, in the ancient world, complete democracy was achieved either in theory or in practice. At the height of Athenian glory, democratic government represented no more than a fraction of the adult inhabitants of the Polis. Although the few thousand citizens who gathered on the Acropolis may be said to have put into practice the rule of the *Demos*, yet the *Demos* was narrowly defined and excluded the metics, slaves, and women, who together constituted the majority of the adult inhabitants of Attica. What can be said, however, is that this ancient world laid the groundwork for the developments in political democracy that have occurred in the past two centuries in the Western world.[24]

The outlook for democracy in colonial America was anything but bright. A despised minority in England, arguing for tolerance and the purification of the Church of England, became the ruling elite of Massachusetts Bay and New England. The clergy and secular rulers who formed that theocratic government would have nothing to do with democracy. In the estimation of Governor Winthrop, it was "the meanest and worst of all forms of government." With this statement the Reverend John Cotton would have been in accord. The hanging of the pestilent Quakers on Boston Common and voices in

[24] Gustave Glotz, *The Greek City and Its Institutions* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1930).

the wilderness like that of Roger Williams testify to the lack of belief in either tolerance or democracy of the early American leadership.

"Man is born free, and is everywhere in chains" were the ringing words with which Rousseau inaugurated his *Contrat Social*. The important implication of that sentence was not Rousseau's notion that the artificialities of a highly sophisticated society constituted men's chains. The idea that was so pregnant for the years ahead was his belief that freedom is a *Natural Right* of man. This *Liberté*, together with the *Egalité* and *Fraternité* of the end of the eighteenth century, spread like a forest fire over Europe, only to be checked by the barriers thrown up by the reactionary movements of the nineteenth century.

The intervening ocean did not confine these new ideas to Europe. It was one thing to take over the doctrine of the inalienable Rights of Man and use this as an instrumentality with which to forge the unity essential to winning our Revolutionary War. It was quite another thing to employ these shibboleths as a basis upon which to formulate articles of government. The great battles of the Constitutional Convention were fought over this issue. If the spirit of the Constitution differs from that of the Declaration of Independence, it is because those who feared democracy were more articulate in framing the Constitution than those who would welcome the rule of the Demos. The first ten amendments were essential additions to insure the acceptance of the document by the states. This was a reflection of the fact that the masses could envisage better than their leaders the direction which the new experiment would take.

America was thus a radically new experiment. Here the ideologies of the Age of Enlightenment found a new and fertile soil for their propagation. A moving frontier, a dynamic people, fabulous resources, opportunity for every man—here were conditions ready-made to test the highest flights of fancy of the romantic philosophers of the Rights of Man. Land was available on easy terms for the working. Society was fluid so far as class and caste lines were concerned. The ladder of opportunity was open even to the top rungs. Wealth often came unexpectedly from the favors of a benign government interested in the development of the country.

With the closing of the frontier, the pre-emption of the most-favored resources, and the development of a corporate, industrial economy, the twentieth century has witnessed a decline in economic opportunity on the individualistic level. Assuming that this trend will continue, it seems reasonable to say that the broadening of the base of political democracy will rest on the coincident development of economic democracy.

The social changes that brought about the fruition of political democracy were reflected in the family. The legal right of the father to kill a disobedient son was accepted by the Colonial statutes of Connecticut. It seems a far cry from such absolute authoritarian rule to the present democratic spirit. Considerable attention will be devoted later to the central position of the child and his welfare in a democratically organized society. The struggle of woman for equality in the past 100 years will also be considered in this connection. Likewise, we shall note the various ways in which the democratic state has been shifting the incidence of economic inequalities from the individual family to the group as a whole.

Science and the American Ethos

No discussion of the main aspects of the American ethos would be complete without reference to the dedication of the people to science, especially in its applied forms. A technological culture could develop only as a consequence of the growth of pure science. This achievement is a relatively recent phenomenon. It began in the eleventh and twelfth centuries with the introduction into Europe of the Arab culture, mediated through the schools of Toledo, Cordova, and Seville. Building on this foundation, the shift in emphasis from the supernatural other-world view to a concentration on this world led to the epochal discoveries of Copernicus, Galileo, Tycho Brahe, Kepler, and others. These in turn became the basis for the Cartesian revolution in philosophical and mathematical thinking that created the elements out of which a Newtonian physico-mathematical explanation of the universe emerged at the end of the seventeenth century.

When Newtonianism had successfully cross-fertilized other fields of knowledge, such as economics, religion, psychology, and government, the stage was set for the remarkable paeans of praise to Science that marked the end of the eighteenth century. In the mind of a Condorcet, mankind was about to enter upon the last and greatest phase of the progress of the human spirit; by implication, there would be no mystery in heaven or on earth which this new instrument would not penetrate.

With such unbridled optimism did the nineteenth century begin. The idea of progress, of the unlimited perfectibility of man and society, had been born in a period when the notion of evolution had been only adumbrated. This concept of progress was supplemented by the greatest germinal idea of the nineteenth century, evolution, and the combination represented further proof of the seemingly limitless possibilities of science. Herbert Spencer's philosophical application of evolution as a universal principle was but the logical corollary of Darwin's theory applied to biology. For a time it seemed that the progress of the physical and biological sciences would be matched by that of the social sciences.

With the founding of their national existence, the American people came into this social inheritance represented by the phenomenal discoveries of the preceding centuries, plus the accompanying optimism. But the victory of the new scientific thoughtways was still in the future. The fruits of less than a century of whole-hearted dedication to scientific pursuits are wonderful to behold. Not only have the natural riches of a continent been released, but also there have been created an industrial potential and a standard of living that are the envy of the rest of the world. Such complete absorption in this task may account for the fact that the American has been practical, active, and energetic rather than passive, speculative, and meditative. It may also explain why the contributions of Americans to the universal heritage of art, music, poetry, and theology have been relatively meager. In the pursuit of his goals, the American has often been led to interpret happiness in terms of overemphasis on material values, or the technological fruits of scientific advances.

The emergence of a scientifically dominated culture has had innumerable effects upon the family. The competition for higher material standards of living and the fruits of the scientific conquest of nature are the foundations of this development. Machines and technology have transformed the household and the world in which the family lives. The decline in the death rate of infants under one year of age is a tribute to applied biological science, as is the accompanying increase in the duration of average life-expectancy. Ordered knowledge has made it possible, at least in theory, for every individual to have as his intellectual birthright the understanding of the processes of conception and reproduction. The hazards and pains of childbearing have been mitigated. As this discussion proceeds, the impact of science upon the family will be met on every hand.[25]

The ideas which we have outlined are among those constituting the core of the American ethos. These ideas affect the family at every turn, and they will appear throughout our entire treatment. These are not the only constituent elements of American culture. We have omitted various other central aspects of this ethos as not precisely germane to our central purpose in this book. Among these omitted elements are a belief in education, an excessive materialism, a hedonistic outlook on life, the striving for the "biggest and best" that sometimes becomes a sort of group megalomania, a generosity and sympathy with the underdog, the worship of success, the cult of the average man, and other equally significant characteristics which an anthropologist would observe in the contemporary American scene.[26] These are also very real elements of the American ethos. They do not, however, bear so directly upon the family as those we have selected. In terms of this broad cultural pattern, we present our analysis of the American family.

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[25] Cf. Meyer F. Nimkoff, "Technology, Biology, and the Changing Family," *American Journal of Sociology*, July 1951, LVII, 20-26.

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3

THE FAMILY AND RELIGION

The affinity of religion and the family is very close. With the possible exception of Confucianism, few religions maintain as intimate a connection between family values and religious teachings as does Christianity. The close relationship has been maintained since the days of the Old Testament, and the succeeding teachings of Christianity have been closely incorporated into the mores of the family. In the long development of the family in Western European and American culture, the role of the Christian Church has been prominent. Although the close reciprocal relationship between church and family has been considerably modified by the secular changes taking place in our society, the teachings and precepts of historical Christianity are still fundamental to the family. Religion is the first element of the American culture pattern that calls for extensive analysis to provide the social setting for our consideration of the family.

The Family and Christianity

The family has a place of central importance in the development of the altruistic sentiments.[1] Although it is theoretically possible that love, benevolence, and altruism might have a purely secular basis, it is clear that religion has always enshrined these ethical and moral values and hence reinforced the role of the family. Religion is a way of life closely related to the family. The precepts, creeds, and symbols of religion are sanctioned by man's highest conception of the good and are themselves an outgrowth of conduct with its taproots in man's early family experience. We shall briefly indicate the evolution of family sentiments throughout the history of the Christian doctrines.

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[1] Robert Briffault, *The Mothers* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1927), I, 145-46.

The founder of Christianity was the social heir of a lofty conception of the Deity reached by the prophets of Judaism. The Old Testament represents this intellectual quest, which began with the notion that God was a deity of war and cruelty, progressed to the belief that He was a judge over weak and sinful man, and ended with the conception of a God who achieved His purposes through all-embracing and self-sacrificial love. He was not to be approached through the institutional forms of temple sacrifices but, according to prophets like Amos or Micah, by the individual directly through the medium of a high standard of ethical behavior. Out of Hosea's marital and other experiences came his notion that God is One of infinite forgiveness and love.

Building on these concepts, Jesus' approach to the world was primarily individual rather than social. Love of God and love for the brethren form, with the individual, an interconnected triangle, but always with the individual as the starting point. If a man truly loves God, he will express that love in his relationships with his fellow men. Hence the kingdom will come universally, not so much in finding God in love for the brethren but rather through love for the brethren as a consequence of love for God. This approach to the individual man, together with his eschatological ideas (the notions of the speedy catastrophic ending of the world and the coming of the new world) freed Jesus from the necessity of presenting any blueprints for the reordering of human society. One looks in vain in his teachings for any detailed program for the government of men or nations or for an economic plan leading to more effective production and distribution of goods. His intense concern for the spiritual regeneration of the individual was his substitute for social planning.

In spite of Jesus' lack of concern for the reordering of what today would be termed social institutions, he did give many specific injunctions with respect to marriage and the family. He taught that marriage was indissoluble (Mark 10:11; Luke 16:18), with the possible exception of a situation where adultery was involved (Matthew 5:32). Sexual intercourse was to be limited to married people, a doctrine applied to men as well as to women. Consistent with his emphasis on the inner spirit and motive, he went beyond the physical act of infidelity and taught that mere desire was hazardous (Matthew 5:28).

At the same time, the Master stressed certain loyalties as even more imperious than family ties. A man might well have to sacrifice a sacred duty to his father if higher spiritual demands called for it (Luke 9:59, 60). Furthermore, in the higher realms of the spiritual kingdom that was to be, there would be no marriage or giving in marriage (Matthew 22:30), and men might have to make themselves "eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake" (Matthew 19:12).

Far more important than any specific teachings concerning the details of the social ordering of family life, however, was the manner in which family relationships and experiences colored Jesus' teachings. The conception of God as a heavenly father was central. This meant the elevation of a simple familial relationship to a position of divine importance. In contrast to the Old Testament, where only eleven times is God mentioned as a father, this is the usual method of reference in the New Testament.

Although the enlarged patriarchal family of early Hebrew society had undergone some changes by Jesus' time, there still was no deviation from the cardinal belief that the head of the family was the father. From a sociological point of view this is worth noting; however great may have been the Master's affection for his mother, there was no transference of this reverence to a conception of God as a divine mother. In the development of the ecclesiastical institution of the Church in the early and late Middle Ages, however, the saint who was universally venerated was the Virgin Mary, the mother of God. Although theologically never raised to the position of the Godhead, she became the universal symbol of mercy, pity, love, and intercession in behalf of humanity.

A corollary of the teaching of the fatherhood of God was that of the brotherhood of all men. This notion that all men are brothers is also a simple familial relationship elevated to the cosmic level. The Greek philosopher, Zeno, the founder of the Stoic school, several centuries earlier had worked out a conception of the fundamental unity of all mankind deriving from the sharing of each in a kind of divine reason. The common man in Jesus' day, as in all ages, was not attracted by the subtleties of abstract philosophical thought, but he could understand an interpretation of the universe that was an enlargement of his everyday experience. Jesus took the lowest common denominator of human experience—the relationships of a normal family life—and raised them to the lofty plane of an explanation of the spiritual ordering of the universe. As Professor Groves puts it: "In an elemental, everyday way, it provided the tutelage that was necessary for the understanding of the spirit of love, as it flowered from the fatherhood of God and expressed itself in the brotherhood of man."[2]

The revolutionary character of Jesus' teaching can be appreciated only against the background of the Messianic conceptions of the Hebrew culture in which he labored and of whose historic expressions he was the heir. The Hebrew interpretation of the coming of the Messiah was that of one who would institute a revolt to throw off the imperial shackles of the Roman administration. Utilizing the concept of the Kingdom of God, the Master had to give it a meaning quite distinct from its connotation to the respectably religious Hebrews, for whom it signified merely a political kingdom. By his constant insistence on the inner motive and spirit, on the dignity and worth of the individual person, and by his illustrations of these truths drawn from domestic life, he changed the meaning of the kingdom from a political to a spiritual one. Many of his parables, which served as vehicles for his teachings, had a familial setting as their starting point. The householder and his servants, the invitation to the wedding feast, the prodigal son—these are examples of the manner in which Jesus utilized family situations to express spiritual truths.

The Family and the Church

In a study of marital adjustment, Burgess and Cottrell examined the religious interests and affiliations of some 526 couples. Information was obtained on church affiliation, attendance at church and Sunday school services, place of marriage, and the officiant at the wedding. Using a threefold classification of marital adjustment (good, fair, and poor), they found that husbands and wives reporting no church affiliation at marriage rated below the average in good adjustment. Where husbands and wives reported no early attendance at Sunday school or where they ceased such activities after ten years of age, there was a much smaller proportion of successful marital adjustments than among those indicating attendance for 19 to 25 years or longer.[3]

In the matter of early church attendance, those husbands who attended frequently prior to their marriage had a more favorable adjustment score than those who signified no or infrequent attendance. Marriages performed in church or parsonage had a better chance of success than those performed elsewhere. This does not mean that there is anything magical about a wedding held under religious auspices. Rather, it would seem to indicate that people with sufficiently strong religious interests to lead them to marry under church auspices have a better-than-average chance for successful adjustment. Members of families where great store is set on religious sentiments are apparently more likely to develop into the type of mature personalities that can make a success of marital and family adjustments.[4]

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[2] Ernest R. Groves, *Christianity and the Family* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1942), pp. 10-11.

[3] Ernest W. Burgess and Leonard S. Cottrell, Jr., *Predicting Success or Failure in Marriage* (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1939), pp. 122 ff.

The couples in this study were predominantly urban, middle-class, native-white, Protestant Americans with a high school education or better. As such, they were representative of the middle-class family, which is the central subject of our study. Although they were primarily Protestant, this fact in itself apparently had but slight bearing on the problem of adjustment. Sects or denominations are the external agencies for expressing the multiplicity of human interpretations of the important religious needs of man. In fashioning the personality in terms of potential marital adjustment, these fundamental religious interests, rather than the particular form, are the important factors. Religion may express certain more basic personality factors and hence cannot be fully considered in isolation. As Burgess and Cottrell are careful to point out, "Religious identification and activity may be taken as an index of social and personal attitudes," [5] rather than as constituting in themselves a fundamental adjustment factor.

The affinity between the Christian religion and the family has been in evidence from the very beginning. During twenty centuries of growth and change, however, so much emphasis has been placed on the *forms* of religious life that the basic content has been lost, or at least adumbrated. This can be seen in terms of the relationships between the modern church and the family, as compared with the American scene of only two centuries ago. In the colonial New England town, the church represented the center of the intellectual, social, and recreational life of the community, as well as the religious. The clergyman was frequently the best educated man of the town and as such was looked to for leadership in civic affairs. The church was the regular gathering place not only for religious services but for social fellowship as well. The home took for granted that daily Bible reading and family prayers were as essential as food and drink. The church was the community welfare agency, the center for the care of the poor, the sick, and the unfortunate.

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[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 125-26.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 122.

The church still stands in the geographical center of the New England town. But the clergyman is no longer the only educated man in the town; he now shares this distinction with a host of others. A secular society provides community centers for entertainment, fellowship, and recreation. An industrialized economy does not lend itself to family gatherings for Bible reading and prayers, and the departure from certain formal aspects of such practices is a further result of increasing secularization.[6] The church now serves as an adjunct to public agencies charged with social welfare, rather than as a leader in the dispensation of charity. Education is no longer under the aegis of the religious fellowships, except in those communities where specific church schools are separately supported and maintained.

In the face of these radical changes, the statement is frequently made that the family no longer performs any religious functions and the Church has lost its *raison d'être* in relation to the family. This contention, however, ignores certain obvious facts. The Christian heritage has exercised a strong influence on the development of American culture. Much of the stimulus for humanitarian, charitable, and social welfare work has therefore derived from the Christian ethic, however much such activities may now be carried on in the name of state, community, or other political agents. Sunday schools and parochial schools have taken over the functions of providing religious education formerly supplied by the more integrated family group.

But the chief error in assuming that the church and the family are no longer interdependent is the confusing of *form* with *substance*. Just as the organized forms of religion have been modified in the transition from the predominantly rural New England of the seventeenth century to the urban-industrial society of the twentieth century, so the family and the home have been influenced by the same group of social factors. In this process of social changes, the types of interaction between these two institutions have undergone substantial modification.

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[6] Ernest W. Burgess, ed. *The Adolescent in the Family* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1934), pp. 171-72.

Far more important than the nature of the interrelationship is the content of the teachings of Christianity. Although the chief business of the Church is to foster religious living, the chief agency for the promulgation of religious values is the family. Only insofar as the family promotes true community of living can there be any real hope for the advancement of the community of all men. Regina W. Wieman states that "The family pursues its purpose out of a biologically conditioned interest in the bringing of the personality of its members to the highest fulfillment. The church pursues its purpose out of a religiously conditioned interest in the bringing of life to highest fulfillment throughout the wider reaches. . . . These two institutions work with the same purpose and the same material. The purpose is human fulfillment, the material is human life."[7] Groves expresses the same point in a somewhat different manner when he contends that genuine spiritual experience is not something added to ordinary life activities, but rather a transfiguring of such experiences.[8]

This intimate relationship of religion and the family has been evidenced throughout the development of Western society. The organized Church has signalized every crisis in the life history of the individual by appropriate rites. The fully developed sacramental system of the Catholic church bears abundant testimony to this relationship. Birth, adolescence, marriage, and death are among the most critical stages in the career of the individual. Religion does not merely take cognizance of these crises but makes them the occasions around which the ministrations of the religious organization revolve. There is good reason why the beginning of each life is marked by that external sign of God's grace, the sacrament of baptism, and why, at the other extreme, divine unction is administered. The sacraments of confirmation, ordination, Eucharist or the Mass, penance, and marriage provide spiritual assistance through the other vicissitudes of life. All of these religious ministrations have some bearing upon the family. Those with the most direct implications are the sacraments of baptism and marriage.

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[7] Regina W. Wieman, *The Modern Family and the Church*, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1937), p. 143.

[8] Groves, *Christianity and the Family*, p. 27.

The Church and Marriage

In the Burgess-Cottrell study of marital adjustment, 467 out of 518 couples reporting were married by a religious official, as compared with only 51 couples who were joined in wedlock by civil officials. This proportion compares favorably with the analysis of more than 750,000 marriages in the collection area in 1940 (embracing 28 states), in which the religious ceremony outnumbered the civil by four to one.[9] Only a small proportion of the Burgess-Cottrell couples reported Catholic affiliations, whereas more than half of them were Protestants. This sampling would seem to indicate that, even where marriage under church auspices is not mandatory, the powerful tradition of seeking the blessing of religion on marriage is still very effective. For the Catholics, marriage is a divine institution, not created or restored by man but by God; God is, furthermore, the author of the lasting stability of the marriage bond, its unity and its firmness. This doctrine makes it imperative that the Church as the custodian of the sacrament must lend its benediction to a valid marriage.

Marriage as a sacrament, however, did not reach its full fruition until some centuries after the foundation of the Church. In the early period, there was a general acceptance of the prevailing Roman forms of betrothal and marriage, although as early as the first century it was considered desirable to seek a priestly benediction of the marriage. This benediction was not regarded as compulsory and marriages without it were not thereby handicapped. The custom gradually developed by which the newly wedded couple, after the nuptials were concluded, attended religious services. This led after a time to the introduction of prayers that had a special bearing on the wedding. By the eighth century, the bride-mass was present. This occurred after the wedding and consisted of receiving the benediction of the Church. In the tenth century, it had become the rule to observe, on the porch of the church, the so-called temporal features of the marriage, such as the consent of the parties and the assignment of the wife's dower. These were followed immediately by entrance into the church and the religious observances.

The completion of the control of marriage by the ecclesiastical arm occurred when the clergy assumed the prerogative of joining the two. They did so by assuming the right of the *gifta*, which had always been the privilege of the parent or guardian and consisted in the bestowal of the bride on the groom. Here is the genesis of that question which occurs to this day in some wedding ceremonies: "Who giveth this woman to be wedded to this man?" When the embarrassed father answers, he thereby consigns to the ecclesiastical representative the exclusive privilege of uniting the couple in wedlock.

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[9] U.S. Bureau of the Census, Vital Statistics—Special Reports, *Preliminary Marriage Statistics for 28 States: 1940*, March 21, 1942 Vol. 15, No. 19, p. 203.

The revolt of the sixteenth century against the Catholic church left the *form* of wedlock much as it had been. What Protestantism did was to renounce the sacramental *nature* of marriage. This is still the essential difference between the churches. For Luther, conditioned as a good Catholic, there was a fundamental contradiction in his thinking that served to arm both the opponents and the proponents of the sacramental nature of marriage. The Wittenberg professor could not escape the conviction that marriage was "ordained and founded by God," a "most spiritual status"; yet at the same time he renounced its sacramental character and wanted to turn over all such matters to the temporal powers.

It remained for the Cromwellian era in England, under the influence of the Puritans and more especially the Independents, to divorce marriage completely from its religious connections. This was done by the Civil-Marriage Act of 1653. This complete severance of marriage from religion was revoked with the Restoration, when the conditions that prevailed prior to the Commonwealth were restored. Although denying the sacramental *nature* of marriage, the Anglican church maintained its role in respect to the *form* of marriage; in the Hardwicke Act of 1753, it made a religious ceremony obligatory with minor exceptions.

This brief historical summary explains why, for the greater part of the seventeenth century, Massachusetts and other New England colonies denied to the Church any place in marriage and declared it to be only a civil contract. The radical Separatists of Plymouth, with their Dutch background, and the less revolutionary Puritans were here carrying to its logical culmination the denial of the holy character of marriage. The following Massachusetts statute of 1646 sounds strange today: "no person whatsoever in this jurisdiction, shall joyne any persons together in Marriage, but the Magistrate, or such other as the General Court, or Court of Assistants shall Authorize in such place, where no Magistrate is near." Equally strange is the statute of 1692, authorizing all settled ministers to solemnize marriage. In Rhode Island, it was not until 1733 that "the settled and ordained ministers and elders of every society and denomination of Christians were permitted to join persons in Marriage." [10]

From that time to the present day, it has been the practice in American society to recognize the validity of marriage performed *either* under the auspices of the church or the civil authorities. The complete separation of church and state and the grant of tolerance to all religious groups did not alter this arrangement. The natural concern of the public authority over the change in status of its citizens accompanying marriage has caused the state to insist that this change be socially announced by securing a license to marry. The state has also been concerned that every marriage be made a matter of public record, not merely for the purpose of providing adequate vital statistics but also to insure the proper legal rights of children and heirs.

This apparent overlapping of interest between civil and ecclesiastical authorities has not caused any particular difficulty. The Catholic church, whose constituency must wed under the aegis of the religious organization, has always recognized the contractual characteristic as well as the sacramental nature of marriage. The first is served by the temporal power, whereas the second can be satisfied only by the religious power. The Quakers, who dispense with any officiant, have never found any difficulty in conforming to the demands of the state.

In the face of these secular trends, the question naturally arises, "Why is it that the majority of people continue to regard marriage as something that comes within the domain of religion rather than simply a contract, comparable to other contractual phases of life?" Some persons contend that the continuing desire for a religious marriage is merely a survival of an earlier era. It is more likely, however, that most people intuitively regard marriage as much more than a contract, even in a social system where many relationships are on a contractual level. Commitment to a lifelong relationship such as marriage, fraught with the future responsibilities of intelligent parenthood, is no ordinary contract, even if the participants cannot accept the sacred derivation of the relationship. In any event, it is clear that for many people the association of religion and marriage is still very real. This reality is present, no matter what varying interpretations may be given to the words: "Into this *holy* estate, these two persons come now to be joined"; and "Whom God hath joined together, let no man put asunder."

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[10] George E. Howard, *A History of Matrimonial Institutions*, 3 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1904), Cf. I, 287 ff. and II, 133, 138.

The Protestant Ethic and the Family

For the past four centuries the general movement in the Western world has been from a religious to a secular, scientific attitude toward the universe. In his study of social dynamics, Sorokin concludes that the bonds that held society together in the medieval world were essentially *familistic*, as opposed to the *compulsory* and *contractual* bonds that characterize the modern era.[11] When the Christian religion, as embodied in the universal church, was the central organizing principle of the culture pattern, it was to be expected that social relationships would be predominantly familistic in character.[12] Illustrations of the trend from the familistic to the contractual were the recognition of marriage as a contract rather than a sacrament, the rights of the individuals to make their own choice of marital partners, the "contract" theories of government, the contractual bases of economic and business relationships, and more recently the compulsory nature of totalitarianism.

These major social changes arose during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In the larger perspective, the Protestant revolt, with its emphasis on the priesthood of all believers, was the religious facet of a total cultural shift that was marked by equally striking social, political, and economic changes. This does not, necessarily, imply that the Protestant ethic was the basic factor giving rise to an individualistic capitalism, as Max Weber contends.[13] Freedom was in the cultural "air" of the age and the demand for religious freedom proved to be only one of such elements. When Luther nailed his 95 theses on the door of the Castle Church at Wittenberg in the year 1517, he was indeed striking a powerful blow for religious freedom. That he himself was quite unaware of the total spirit of the age is evidenced by the fact that, when the Peasants' revolts struck a comparable blow in another area of life, he was violent in his denunciation of their conduct.

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[11] Pitirim A. Sorokin, *Social and Cultural Dynamics* (New York: American Book Company, 1937), III, chaps. 1-3. Cf. also Carle C. Zimmerman, *Family and Civilization* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1947).

[12] Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, *op. cit.*

[13] Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1930).

Individual marital choice was encouraged by Luther's hearty affirmation of marriage itself as a fit state for man and woman. In striking contrast to the grudging acceptance of the marital state by the early Church Fathers, he exclaimed rapturously: "O what a great rich and magnificent blessing there is in the married state; what joy is shown to man in matrimony by his descendants." [14] The glories of chastity and celibacy could not be accepted by this former Augustinian monk. At the same time, Luther remained essentially medievalist in his outlook. Although he renounced the Church in favor of the individual priesthood of the believer, his movement ended in the establishment of a state-church.

As applied to marriage and the family, the teachings of John Calvin were more consistently radical than those of Luther. Calvin believed that all celibacy, including that of the clergy, was an unnatural state and that men and women who had taken the veil should, like Luther and the nun Katharine von Bora, renounce the vow of celibacy and marry. Calvin sanctioned divorce under the stress of incapacity for sexual intercourse, desertion, and "extreme religious incompatibility." He also maintained that marriage was not a sacrament any more than "agriculture, architecture, and shoemaking," which are worthy institutions, "legitimate ordinances of God," but no sacraments.[15] Freedoms such as these have become so integral a part of our heritage that we take them for granted, unmindful of the long and slow process by which they evolved from the absolutism of feudalism.

Upon the crucial matter of individual choice for young people wishing to marry, Calvin was apparently uncertain. He wavered between a strict parental determination of the marital contract and considerable freedom to the prospective husband and wife to marry whom they chose. On the side of strict parental choice, he stated that "Since marriage forms a principal part of human life, it is right that in contracting it, children should be subject to their parents and should obey their counsel." [16] Calvin feared that the "tender and

[14] Quoted by Arthur W. Calhoun, *A Social History of the American Family* (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1917), I, 22.

[15] Georgia Harkness, *John Calvin* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1931), p. 138.

[16] Quoted from Calvin, *Opera*, by Harkness, p. 141.

slippery age" of adolescence might lead young people astray into unsuitable marriages contracted in the heat of youthful concupiscence.

Other Calvinistic interpretations of the marital code were more liberal. These allowed considerable freedom to the amorous couple, provided they had reached the legal age for marriage (twenty for men and eighteen for the women) and hence were presumably qualified to judge their own intentions. If the parents refused permission for such a young couple to marry, the matter might be referred to the Consistory, the ecclesiastical body whose special function was to represent the Church on matters of faith, morals, and kindred matters. This body might then summon the recalcitrant parents and instruct them to give their consent to the match. If the parents still refused to sanction the marriage, the young couple could marry anyhow, without the parental blessing. This was individual freedom with a vengeance and represented a standard of self-determination in the marital contract considerably higher than that of many Puritan theologians who followed Calvin.[17]

Here, then, were the beginnings of the modern emphasis on contractual, as opposed to the familistic, bonds that formerly provided the cement of the social structure. The simultaneous growth of Protestantism, capitalism, and individualism offers a striking commentary on the interdependence of culture. The areas of the New World in which the spirit of economic gain most closely accompanied the individual search for religious salvation have also been those in which individual choice, as an indispensable prerequisite for marriage, insinuated itself into the mores of the middle and lower classes. All phases of the culture pattern participated in these changes, including the notion that government itself is at root a compact among individuals. The principal concomitant variation in all of these aspects is that of individual freedom, the ability to make the basic choices in life rather than have them made by custom, church, or parents.

The Nature of the Sex Mores

Many years ago, William Graham Sumner coined the term "folkways" to describe those customary ways of behaving in society arising from the interaction of individuals seeking to answer life's basic needs.[18] These customary modes of behavior assume added significance when the notion of group welfare is attached to them. When the group believes that the violation of the folkways will endanger the well-being of the whole, the folkways have thereby imperceptibly advanced to what Sumner called the "mores." Mores are those accepted forms of behavior whose violation must be prevented in order that the group itself may not be endangered.[19]

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[17] *Ibid.*

[18] William Graham Sumner, *Folkways* (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1906).

The story does not end here. Though mores may have grown out of social living, man has often attributed to supernatural powers the original dictation of these codes of behavior. Tremendous power has been lent to the mores by the fact that they have had behind them the sanction of the spirit world or the Deity. "Honor the Sabbath day and keep it holy" is a divine commandment, setting aside one day in seven as being especially sacred. In a secular age, it may be contended that the reason for the practice has been that individual and group well-being is best promoted by the dedication of one day in seven to rest, relaxation, and contemplation. This rational and social explanation, however, does not explain the supernatural sanctions for this practice afforded by divine agency.

One of the most significant intellectual revolutions of modern times has followed the studies of sex behavior initiated by Sigmund Freud, Havelock Ellis, and others. The revolution has consisted not so much in any discovery of the relative importance of sex in human life, for man had intuitively realized its significance for countless generations. What these pioneers have done has been to free the subject from the repressive silence that has surrounded it and to make initial forays in the direction of its scientific study. Perhaps the reason these students have been so maligned is not their excessive enthusiasm or the ridiculous conclusions drawn by many of their overzealous followers, but rather the same kind of opposition that has greeted every attempt to study scientifically phenomena regarded as outside the domain of such study.

Considerable attention will be given later to contemporary efforts to promote education for marriage and family living. Such programs, whether in clinics, schools or study groups, devote a reasonable proportion of time to the frank and open discussion of sex adjustments in marriage, the psychosexual development of the individual from infancy to maturity, and the bearing of the sex urge on personality.

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[19] *Ibid.*, p. 30.

The fact that churches and clergymen are becoming increasingly active in promoting such education reveals a growing appreciation of the simple dictum that knowledge is a better guide to successful living than ignorance. It is also a frank recognition of the fact that sex, in and of itself, is not sinful. When this movement has gained momentum, violations of the sex code may begin to take their rightful place alongside other transgressions of the moral code, rather than occupying the unique position of the greatest of all wrongs. For all too many people, the word *immoral* primarily suggests a sexual offense.

Society and social order at all times are dependent on the control and direction of the drives of the biological man. The notion that man's inherent urges and drives should be given free and untrammeled expression is a completely unworkable figment of the imagination. With no social control and direction in the interests of the group as a whole, there would be no social order. No society has ever been found without some devices for controlling and canalizing the sex drive. Belief that primitive societies allow the unregulated expression of sex will be thrice exploded upon examination of any textbook in anthropology.[20]

A re-examination in the light of modern knowledge of the socially inherited mechanisms of control as applied to the sex drive is taking place at the present time.[21] The real problem is to discover more rational methods of control supported by powerful social sanctions to replace those devices adapted to a social milieu that took for granted supernatural dictates. Since marriage is the focal point around which the received sex codes have been oriented, the systems of social control for keeping the sex impulse within bounds consist of such devices as: (1) attitudes with respect to chastity and virginity; (2) laws aimed at checking premarital and extramarital sex relations, notably fornication, rape, and adultery; (3) the social ostracism and lack of legal protection associated with the birth of children out of wedlock; (4) laws to prevent the "unnatural" expression of the sex drive.

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[20] Geoffrey May, *Social Control of Sex Expression* (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1931).

[21] Sylvanus M. Duvall, *Men, Women and Morals* (New York: Association Press, 1952), chaps. 1-3.

The Church and the Sex Mores

The first of these is of prime importance. How did it come about that chastity was widely regarded as the highest form of sex purity? The answer is to be found in the dominant role in the intellectual formulation of the Christian ethic played by the early Church Fathers. They were themselves the cultural heirs of the following ideas and practices: (1) survivals of primitive taboos on sex in the life and teaching of the Hebrews; (2) ascetic cults which practiced rigid denial of the demands of the body; (3) the philosophical dualism of Greek thought which drew a sharp distinction between soul and body, making the former akin to the divine and the latter the source of all evil. These three cultural streams—Primitive-Hebrew, Ascetic, and Greek—came together in the minds of the earliest intellectual creators of Christianity, living in a Roman milieu characterized by an excessive and socially harmful sex license. The result was a series of pronouncements on sex that have exerted a powerful and continuous influence on Western ways of life down to the present.

The early Church Fathers stood on the cultural watershed from which issued these dominant social attitudes. Whereas the utterances of Jesus concerning marriage and sex were meager and ambiguous, there was no lack of conviction in Paul's statements: "Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife and every woman her own husband. . . ." "But I speak this by permission and not by commandment . . . for I would that all men were even as I myself." (Paul was unmarried.) "I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, it is good for them if they abide even as I. But if they cannot contain, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to burn." [22]

In the beginning the Church Fathers seemed to have had a fairly high regard for marriage. Clement of Alexandria spoke of marriage as "a sacred image to be kept pure from those things which defile it." Ignatius maintained the purity of the marriage state. From the third century, however, an increasingly grudging acceptance of marriage developed. Three degrees of sex purity came to be distinguished: (1) the virgin state; (2) celibacy, or denial voluntarily adopted after marriage or after the death of husband or wife; (3) marriage, or the lowest form of sex purity.

[22] I Corinthians, vii: 1-9.

Tertullian echoed Paul's thought and carried it to its logical conclusion when he said: "The Lord Himself said—'Whoever has seen a woman with a view to concupiscence, has already violated her in his heart.' But has he who has seen her with a view to marriage done so less or more? . . . Accordingly the best thing for a man is not to touch a woman, and accordingly the virgin's is the principal sanctity, because it is free from affinity with fornication." [23]

Cyprian uttered the following paean of praise to virginity and chastity: "Chastity is the dignity of the body, the ornament of morality, the sacredness of the sexes, the bond of modesty, the source of purity, the peacefulness of home, the crown of concord. . . . What else is virginity than the glorious preparation for the future life? . . . Virginity is the continuance of infancy. Virginity is the triumph over pleasures." [24] This kind of exaltation of the virgin state meant that in theory the Church placed the welfare of the individual soul above the necessity for the perpetuation of the race. But it would be a grave error to think that these leaders did not perceive that, if everyone followed this principle, man would speedily eliminate himself from the earth. Their insight into human nature told them that the vast majority of people would find these dictates too exacting to be willing or able to follow them.

The Fathers therefore drew a distinction between the *advice* and the *requirements* of the Gospel. For the few who were capable of what they regarded as the highest courage and virtue, chastity would be willingly accepted. For the many who lacked the requisite moral bravery, marriage would continue to be the expression of their lives. This gives the only possible explanation of what was otherwise a flat contradiction; namely, that the Church was willing to elevate to the sacramental position that state which represented the lowest form of virtue—marriage.

The canons of judgment applicable to the twentieth century cannot have the same validity when applied to the ideas and practices of the fifth century, or vice versa. From the early Church Fathers to Freud, however, there is more continuity than is immediately apparent. Someone has epitomized the change from the fifth to the twentieth century as a movement from "sex repression to sex obsession." This is only partially true. The end product of the earlier preoccupation with sex was certainly repression; the end product of the modern concern with sex is yet to appear, although a by-product of the current emphasis has proved to be for some a cult of neoromantic self-expression.

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[23] Tertullian, On *Exhortation to Chastity*, Ante-Nicene Library; Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1869), XVIII, 13-14.

[24] Cyprian, *Of the Discipline and Advantage of Chastity, ibid.*, XIII, 255-57.

At both ends of the time interval, however, sex has been an obsession. The Church Fathers worked out a religious scheme of control which was one of complete denial or repression. The Freudians and related schools, equally impressed with the all-pervading influence of sex, have conducted exploratory scientific investigations with the ultimate objective of social control through intelligent direction. The early Church Fathers and the modern students of sex alike appreciate that sex is an all-pervasive phenomenon and that the need for its control is a social constant.

Contemporary religious organizations have responded to the modification in the principles of repression resulting from accumulated knowledge. Religious teachings clearly recognize the twofold aspect of sex functioning: namely, its purpose as applied to procreation and its importance apart therefrom. The Catholic position is a clear expression of this changing emphasis. Although still adhering to the principle that sex is primarily for purposes of procreation, it admits the secondary significance of the normal expression of the sex drive. "For in matrimony as well as in the use of matrimonial rights," says Pius XI, "there are also secondary ends, such as mutual aid, the cultivating of mutual love, and the quieting of concupiscence which husband and wife are not forbidden to intend so long as they are subordinated to the primary end and so long as the intrinsic nature of the act is preserved." [25]

The Committee on Marriage and the Home of the former Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America speaks for a large proportion of American Protestants. The Committee puts it this way: "In conception we are in the presence of the wonder and mystery of the beginnings of human life. . . . But in sex relations between husband and wife we are also in the presence of another mystery. . . . We have here the passing of shame and the realization of the meaning of sex in divine economy, which makes the union of the two mates a supreme expression of their affection and comradeship. . . . There is general agreement also that sex union between husbands and wives as an expression of mutual affection, without relation to procreation, is right. This is recognized by the Scriptures, by all branches of the Christian church, by social and medical science, and by the good sense and idealism of mankind." [26]

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[25] *Casti Connubii—Christian Marriage*, Encyclical of Pope Pius XI (New York: The America Press, 1936), p. 18.

Christianity and the Role of Woman

Nothing seems more natural today than that woman should be taking her rightful place alongside man as an equal. In American society, woman is at the end of a century of struggle which has yielded her proximation to man in legal, political, educational, and social rights. This movement for democratic equality will constitute the subject of a separate discussion. At this point the relation of religion to the position of woman is the sole concern. Her complete equality with man seems to many of the Christian churches nothing more than a logical carrying out of the fundamental dictum of Jesus that every individual is a child of the Heavenly Father and therefore the spiritual equal of every other individual.

The spiritual import of Jesus' teaching was one thing; its practical application was quite another. Hebrew society was rigidly patriarchal both in family organization and in the larger social pattern. The Roman imperial world into which Paul carried the Palestinian Gospel was likewise patriarchal. Certain modifications had been taking place in Roman law and practice prior to Christianity in limiting the extreme power of the Roman family patriarch, the *patria potestas*. In spite of these changes, however, the Roman family was still patriarchal. To this day, the society of the Eastern Mediterranean is predominantly a man's world.

As in the matter of the sex mores, it was not Jesus who set the stage for the early Church attitude to woman, but rather the Apostle Paul. The founder of Christianity, in precept and example, on the whole accorded to woman a high degree of spiritual equality. Even though he appears not to have questioned the patriarchal form of social organization, Jesus associated with all kinds and classes of women, treated them with respect and kindness, accepted their ministrations, and did not descend to the abuse of their sex.

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[26] *Statement of the Committee on Marriage and the Home*, Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, 1931.

In Paul, however, a different keynote prevails. "Let women be subject to their husbands as to the Lord, because the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the Church. . . ." "Man is the image and glory of God: but woman is the glory of the man." Wives were to be obedient to their husbands, in recognition of their inferior status, but at the same time husbands were to give "honor to the wife as unto a weaker vessel." [27] It was not man but woman (Eve) who succumbed to the primordial temptation in the Garden. By this act she did not merely usher in "original sin" but involved her own sex, as well as man, in its eternal consequences.

The condemnation of Tertullian is one of the most virulent expressions of the inferiority and degradation of woman by the Church Fathers: "And do you not know that you are (each) an Eve? The sentence of God on this sex of yours lives in this age: the guilt must of necessity live too. You are the devil's gateway: you are the unsealer of that (forbidden) tree: you are the first deserter of that divine law: you are she who persuaded him whom the devil was not valiant enough to attack." [28] These harsh words were sufficiently typical of the prevalent attitude toward woman to lead Lecky to summarize the opinion of the early Christian intellectuals as follows: "Woman was represented as the door of hell, as the mother of all human ills. She should be ashamed at the very thought that she is a woman. She should live in continual penance, on account of the curses she has brought upon the world." [29]

With such attitudes, it was natural that women should be denied the privileges of religious teaching and any major role in the leadership and administration of Church affairs. Even to this day, a large and powerful segment of Christendom is unwilling to accord to woman a position of complete equality with man. Spiritual equality may, it is true, be involved in the Catholic teaching with respect to "honorable, noble obedience," but not complete individual and social equality. The relationships of subordination and superordination between the sexes are clearly indicated in the following statement by Leo XIII. "The man is the ruler of the family and the head of the woman, but because she is flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone, let her be subject and obedient to the man not as a servant but as a companion, so that nothing be lacking of honor or of dignity in the obedience which she pays." [30]

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[27] See I Corinthians, xi: 7-9; I Timothy, ii:14.

[28] Quoted by Willystine Goodsell, *A History of Marriage and the Family* rev. ed. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1934), p. 170.

[29] W. E. H. Lecky, *History of European Morals* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1870), II, 357-58.

The last two centuries have done much to raise the position of women in European and American society. This movement is so important that we shall devote considerable attention to the various political, economic, and social factors that have recently combined to bring it about, both within and without the family. The age-old belief in the inferiority of woman and her consequent subordination to man is rapidly changing before her demonstrable ability to keep pace with man in an ever-increasing number of activities. The ultimate implications of this changing attitude upon the family and the larger society are incalculable.

The Survival Value of Religion in the Family

The Christian religion has been an important part of the American culture pattern, even though social change has modified the Christian heritage both as to form and substance. Religion in its organized form once endeavored to repress or sublimate the sex urge in the interest of purity. The Church has changed its attitude towards the sex drive and contraception in many respects. In its earlier history Christianity assigned to woman an inferior status in the family and society, but in our time there is a revival of the recognition of the dignity of every human being, a characteristic of the teachings of Christ. To compare the role of the Church in the community of colonial times with its role today is to miss the fundamental relationship between religion and the family. It is much more to the point to emphasize the Christian exaltation of familial sentiments and relationships to the level of universal significance.

It is impossible, of course, to arrive at any quantitative measurement of the relationships between the contemporary family and religion. In the realm of personality formation, values, and philosophy of life, this kind of precision is difficult in the present state of knowledge.[31] Statistics on church membership and attendance reveal little concerning the part that religious beliefs play in the actual lives of people. When the Lynds were studying religious loyalties as expressed in church attendance, they asked themselves why the residents of Middletown continued to go to church. One answer they gave to their own query was that many people still find in the church certain *abiding* values in a world characterized by change and instability.[32]

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[30] *Casti Connubii—Christian Marriage*, p. 9.

[31] For an interesting attempt to assess the role of religion in the contemporary Catholic family, see John L. Thomas, "Religious Training in the Roman Catholic Family," *American Journal of Sociology*, September 1951, LVII, 178-83.

Human beings need this feeling of security to which religion has ever ministered. In the promulgation of personal ideals, the Christian religion will continue to have an important place. In the everyday interaction of the members of a family, furthermore, there is constant need for those sentiments of love, affection, loyalty, and altruism which religion at its best has ever fostered. Individuals will continue to marry under religious auspices on the ground that marriage is something more than a mere contract. Other crises in the life history of the individual will continue to emphasize the significance of religious experience or its equivalent. "Man does not live by bread alone." [33]

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[32] Robert S. Lynd and Helen M. Lynd, *Middletown in Transition* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1937).

[33] For a further analysis of the role of organized religion in contemporary American culture, see Bernard Iddings Bell, *Crowd Culture* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1952), chap. 3, "The Church."

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4

THE FAMILY AND INDIVIDUALISM

Individualism is a basic characteristic of American society. The goals and aspirations at the heart of the American culture pattern are those of individual freedom and individual attainment. The family has naturally been affected by these pervasive cultural norms. Each person is expected to choose his own mate, live in his own home, decide upon his own career, make up his own mind as to the number of children he wants, and, finally, to decide whether his marriage will continue. At every stage in the marital process, from initial choice to possible dissolution, the concept of individualism is central to the American family. In this chapter, we shall examine some of the factors that have contributed to this insistence upon the inalienable right of the individual to work out his own salvation in marriage.

Individualism and the American Family

Individualistic conceptions of the family began in Europe, along with many of the same forces that ultimately modified the social relationships of feudalism and laid the foundation for economic and political democracy. By virtue of a unique combination of geographical, cultural, and historical factors, these same forces in America produced a nation where individualistic democracy was to have the most spectacular trial ever offered. Individual family choice has flourished with democracy, as part and parcel of the social heritage of America. The system of open classes, the absence of traditional economic and social barriers, and the rough equality of the frontier combined to make theoretically possible the marriage of any man to any woman. The physical mobility of a nation whose frontier was moving continually westward throughout most of its development further tended to dissolve many of the social ties that bound the American family to the family of the Old World. As a result of these and related forces, democratic equality in both economic relations and marriage flourished in the hospitable soil of America. With the admitted faults of both systems, they cannot be separated. For better or worse, democracy and family individualism are wedded for life.

The early democracy of the frontier was supplemented by the atomistic individualism of the metropolis to dissolve further the traditional institutional controls holding the family together—controls that had been progressively weakening since the rise of capitalism and Protestantism. In a peasant society, the family is unified by ties of landed property, social status, and similarity of interests. In a capitalistic society, landed property gives way to money, wages, salaries, and the ownership of stocks and bonds. Social status yields to relations of contract, where the individual is increasingly motivated by rationalistic and secular reasons for many of his activities, including the choice of a mate. Similarity of interests, which arise in a stable society from a similarity of social background, gives way to the highly individualistic attractions of romantic love.

In our society, individual choice plays a basic role not only in the original formation of the family but also in its continuance. Two persons marry on the grounds of individual choice and often go to the divorce courts on the same grounds. In the increasingly anonymous and individualistic mobility of our society, the ties that formerly bound the family together are for the most part conspicuously lacking. When the family stands or falls on the grounds of individual choice, much of its traditional stability is lost.

This high degree of individualism, born of the dissolution of the traditional bonds of a feudal society and augmented by the way of life of a frontier America, is perhaps the most important single factor contributing to the disorganization of the contemporary family. For individualistic marriage may lead to individualistic divorce. When the husband and wife are convinced that happiness is the fundamental criterion of marriage, they are likely to come to the logical conclusion that when the edge is worn off this first ecstatic feeling, something has happened to their marriage, and they must try again.

We shall consider some of the further implications of romantic love below, both in connection with the original choice of a mate and the continuance of the marriage when once initiated. We are interested here in the elements of the romantic complex that derive most directly from the individualism of our capitalistic ethic.

The individualism that is so integral a part of our cultural heritage is alternately extolled and condemned, depending upon the frame of reference of the critic. Individualism in economic affairs is praised as one of the most characteristically American aspects of the national ethos. Individualism in marriage is also praised, at the same time that its inevitable counterpart in divorce is heartily damned. The same persons that are most firmly convinced of the wisdom of individual choice as the best of all possible bases for marriage are equally vociferous in their denunciation of divorce—at least for reasons short of acute alcoholism, adultery, or conviction for a felony. Something, they insist, is wrong with our society when married couples flock to the divorce courts at the rate of almost a half million per year, in obvious abandon of the eternal principles of marital perpetuity. The family is decaying, Godlessness is rampant, subversive influences are at work undermining the sanctity of the American home. Many, although by no means all, of these difficulties are merely individualistic chickens coming home to roost. Having sowed the wind of individualism, we are reaping the whirlwind of family disorganization.[1]

Capitalism and Individual Freedom

America is a capitalistic country. The essential feature of the capitalistic point of view is a faith in individual action, whether in the field of economic enterprise, religious salvation, or family relationships. Events have long been moving in the direction of an increasing central authority of the democratic state, whose influence upon the life and functions of the family is evident on every side. Nevertheless, the ideology of individualism and capitalism is still a powerful element in the culture of America, where it has become entrenched through centuries of secular and religious example. Any examination of the cultural context within which the family in America has developed and now operates would be incomplete without a consideration of the impact of this capitalistic way of life. The attitudes inculcated in generations of Americans have been applied to aspects of society which were unsuspected by the early businessmen who first broke away from feudal relations. One of these unsuspected applications of the capitalistic ethic has been in the field of the family.

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[1] Cf. Denis de Rougemont, *Passion and Society* (London: Faber and Faber, Ltd., 1940).

Capitalism may be defined as a system of economic relations and social attitudes "which rest on the expectation of profit by the utilization of opportunities for exchange, that is on (formally) peaceful chances of profit." [2] The capitalistic way of life is thus "identical with the pursuit of profit, and forever *renewed* profit, by means of continuous, rational, capitalistic enterprise." [3] In his definitive essay on the subject, Werner Sombart further characterized the capitalistic ethic as follows: "The spirit or the economic outlook of capitalism is dominated by three ideas: acquisition, competition, and rationality." [4] To round out the basic implications of the concept, the elements of rational and competitive acquisition must be supplemented by that of freedom. Individual freedom has been a basic characteristic of the capitalistic world outlook, from the early abortive efforts of the city traders to loosen the feudal fetters that limited their activities to present-day pronouncements made in praise of the complete economic freedom that allegedly existed in nineteenth-century America.

The relationship between individual economic enterprise and the modern American family appears, at first glance, extremely remote. On closer examination, the connection becomes clearer. The world outlook traditionally associated with capitalistic enterprise is cold, rational, and unsentimental—superficially at the opposite end of the emotional spectrum from the tender feelings embodied in the family. Persons successful in capitalistic activities seem largely uninterested in the gentler concerns of marriage and the family and are depicted in novels and motion pictures as so preoccupied with financial considerations that they have no time for family life. In a wider sense, however, the modern American is the child of capitalism in his family affairs almost as completely as in his business activities. The growth and expansion of capitalistic practice and ethics produced an all-pervasive individualism and emancipation from traditional dictates and familial domination that contributed directly to modern conceptions of love, courtship, and the choice of a mate.

[2] Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1930), p. 17.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] Werner Sombart, "Capitalism," *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1930.)

This new freedom was not applied equally, at the same time, to all persons. The old ways lingered for centuries in many areas of the Old World, especially in those sections where religion and tradition combined to keep popular education at a minimum and public enlightenment correspondingly retarded. The New World, with its limitless natural resources, its high degree of social mobility, and its insistence upon the rights of the individual, incorporated the prerogatives of free choice almost from the first. One of the contemporary manifestations of this capitalistic individualism in the United States is the highest divorce rate of any civilized country in the world.

The Secularization of the Family

The modification in the social structure that brought about this emancipation in human relations was one of the most sweeping social changes in history. The traditional forms of social control that determined the attitude and actions of the majority of persons during the Middle Ages may be subsumed under the concept of social status. The position in the feudal order into which the individual was born—whether serfdom or nobility—had its own complex web of rights, duties, and group expectations which each one acquired as a part of his personality.

This elaborate pattern of folkways and mores bore an integral relationship to the patriarchal family that shared with the Church the dominant power over the individual. As this joint power began to decline with the increasing freedom that marked the rise of capitalistic enterprise, a corresponding modification in the relationships clustered about the family began to be evident. In his classic treatise on the subject, Sir Henry Sumner Maine calls this movement a progression from *status to contract*.[5]

The decline in the authority of the family over its members so evident in recent decades is thus not simply a development following World War I. Neither is it an emancipation beginning with the rise of the factory system in the eighteenth century, which first took men, women, and children outside the home in large numbers. Nor was it exclusively produced by the substitution of civil for religious authority, which came into being with the Reformation, although we are now nearing the focal point of social change. This contemporary loosening of the bonds of the family, to which persons in all walks of life point with alarm, is rather the result of a social development lasting more than a thousand years and accompanied by fundamental changes in religious observances, economic activity, political practice, and social custom.

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[5] Sir Henry Sumner Maine, *Ancient Law*, 10th ed. (London: John Murray, 1906).

As the traditional "reciprocity of rights and duties" that formerly bound men together under a complete system of social status gradually dissolved, its place as a cohesive influence in the social structure was taken by contract.[6] If we take the concept of status as including and derived from "the powers and privileges anciently residing in the Family," the grand sweep of social evolution toward an increasingly "progressive society" has thus been "a *movement from status to contract*." [7]

We are concerned with this progression in terms of its effect upon the marriage relationship, with particular emphasis upon the element of individual choice. A pertinent comment on the unsuspected forces inherent in the mode of capitalistic production suggests that "By changing all things into commodities, it dissolved all inherited and traditional relations and replaced time-hallowed custom and historical right by purchase and sale, by the 'free contract.'" [8] From these utilitarian origins came the way of life that ultimately found expression in the extreme individualism of contemporary marriage.

Capitalism and the Middle-Class Family

The role of the middle class in the determination of the new mores was as important as it was extensive. The aristocracy and the patriarchal family system were among the first institutions challenged by the middle class. The absolutism of patriarchal attitudes was so seriously shaken that it has never recovered its former prestige. The middle class was furthermore "in more than one land to destroy the system of primogeniture. It was to displace the family as the economic unit, landed property as the center of economic life. It was to repudiate arranged marriage, establish love-choice, institute divorce, refuse its moral sanctions to prostitution and polite adultery, and even undertake to secure paternal recognition and support for children born out of wedlock."[9]

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[6] Maine, *Ancient Law*, pp. 172-73.

[7] *Ibid.*

[8] Friedrich Engels, *The Origin of the Family* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr and Company, 1902), p. 96.

The significance of these changes was not immediately apparent in all segments of middle-class society; many persons continued to adapt their conduct to that of the feudal and patriarchal aristocracy, even after the way of life that had produced these aristocratic mores had long since disappeared. In the United States, the situation was such as to foster a strong middle-class ideology that had its expression in the form and functions of the family.

The rising middle classes, experiencing the pleasant feeling of power, first timidly and then with increasing self-confidence, gradually came to assert the right of the individual to choose his own mate in marriage. As Calhoun points out, "The bourgeosie may well claim the honor of being first to assert that romantic love is the ideal basis of marriage; but the constraints of private wealth have also operated to frustrate this ideal."[10] In the United States, such constraints have on the whole been at a minimum, particularly with the equal opportunity of the frontier.

The belief in America as a middle-class nation is thus an important contemporary manifestation of this cultural heritage. The assumption is that any man may marry any woman, no matter what the cultural barriers may be, provided the element of individual choice is mutually present. This attitude stresses the individual, rather than the social background from which he or she has come. Love and love alone is considered sufficient under these circumstances. The greater the social differences, the more romantic the marriage. The ideology of a middle-class nation refuses to admit either the existence or the importance of such social differences.

Individualism and the Frontier

The individualism implicit in the capitalistic and middle-class culture pattern is thus a basic element in the American social heritage. The relative absence of class lines has been a feature of American society almost from the beginning. The individual has been expected to marry outside of his own particular stratum of society, provided only he could secure the consent of his intended bride. The individual choice initiated by the breakdown of feudalism, the development of Capitalism, the rise of the Protestant ethic, and the secularization of the family was supplemented by the freedom of the frontier. The result was a social climate for marriage that has remained unique in its emphasis upon the right of the individual to choose his own marriage partner.

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[9] Floyd Dell, *Love in the Machine Age* (New York: Rinehart & Company, Inc., 1930), p. 22.

[10] Arthur W. Calhoun, *A Social History of the American Family* (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1917), I, 22.

Under the dynamic social conditions of the frontier, the patriarchal family, already seriously undermined by the religious and economic changes of the Reformation, became progressively weaker because of the purely physical fact that its members were often separated at an early age from the parental roof by hundreds or thousands of miles. In many cases, the young people never returned to the paternal home or even saw their families again, after they had set out toward the frontier on horseback or by wagon. The power of marital choice, which under the settled conditions of European society tended to rest with the father, suffered inevitable diminution when the young people left home immediately after the wedding and struck out along the Cumberland Road to the West. The economic individualism generated in the Protestant countries was destined to flourish in a country where free land and free opportunity were present to a degree never experienced before or since. Individualism in the choice of a marital partner accompanied this economic individualism and even outdistanced it in the free and transitory society of early America.

These are some of the general characteristics of life on the frontier that have a bearing, either immediate or peripheral, upon the development of the individualistic patterns of marriage in America. Some of these elements were present to a greater extent in one part of the country than in another and were particularly evident on the open frontier in contrast to the settled areas along the Atlantic seaboard. But the frontier, sooner or later, came to include most of the continental United States, as the center of population moved gradually westward. Frontier after frontier was reached, conquered, and passed, until at last there were no more. The heritage of this perennial frontier was the heritage of America. The behavior patterns of the frontier—in business, law, politics, religion, recreation, and family decision—came to be those of an overwhelming majority of the population, as America carved out her destiny between the two oceans.[11]

The Nature of Social Mobility

Social mobility refers to the tendency of human beings to move about over the surface of the earth. Social mobility also involves the tendency to move upward or downward in the social scale, from one social class to another. Some of these human movements, like those of the hobo or migratory worker, may cover considerable physical distance but leave the wanderer in the same social position in which he started. Other peregrinations may bring about considerable elevation of the individual in the social scale, such as those of the pioneers who migrated to the West and became real estate magnates, discovered gold mines, or struck oil. An individual or family may also rise majestically in the social scale from the ghetto to Park Avenue with a physical movement of only a few blocks.

From this welter of human movement, two distinct forms emerge —those movements which are primarily physical and involve little change in the social position of the individual, and those which signalize his elevation or depression in the social scale. Movement in physical space is called *horizontal mobility*, and movement in social space is called *vertical mobility*.[12]

America is the land of social mobility. An unprecedented combination of great natural resources and a sparse indigenous population brought about in America some of the greatest series of mass migrations the modern world has seen. During the course of these migrations, the country from the Atlantic to the Pacific was settled by a restless, volatile, foot-loose people, whose ancestors had come from the East or directly from across the sea and had never taken the time or the trouble to establish deep-seated home ties. The continual westward migration of the settler and the pioneer throughout the course of our national history constitutes perhaps the most prolonged and extensive example of horizontal mobility in history.

At the same time, the establishment of a new society, with equal economic opportunity for all men and no restrictions upon the acquisition of wealth, presented a unique opportunity for the adventurous, the talented, the ruthless, or the unscrupulous to raise themselves in the social scale. Such vertical mobility was as characteristic of the new society as was the continual and relentless movement across the country that continued until the last frontier disappeared in a maze of barbed wire fences.

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[11] Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1921), chap. I. Cf. also Vernon L. Parrington, "Introduction," *The Romantic Revolution in America* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1927).

[12] Pitirim A. Sorokin, "Social Mobility, Its Forms and Fluctuations," *Social Mobility* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1927), chap. VII.

These two phases of social mobility were the chief components of the "American Dream," which has inspired every right-thinking young man in this country for the past hundred and fifty years with visions of wealth and romance. Without these elements of social mobility, American democracy would have remained largely a pious hope, fit only for bemused dreamers and builders of utopias. The conditions that fostered the twin phenomena of social mobility have made this democracy, for large numbers of persons at least, a vivid and delightful reality.

The concept of social mobility in both of its manifestations constitutes a significant key to the development of family relations in the United States; individualism would never have assumed such a prominent part in these relations if our society had presented a more static class structure. The principles of individual choice, individual courtship criteria, and individual familial establishments far from the parental roof—all developed under the impetus of a highly mobile social structure. In a society marked by rigid class stratification, young people of different social backgrounds rarely come in social contact with one another. In a society where the class lines are loosely formed and in a constant state of flux, boys and girls of the most variegated family backgrounds not only meet one another but marry. Indeed, such disregard of diverse class backgrounds under the imperious bidding of romantic love is part of the mores, required behavior under the given circumstances. Both horizontal and vertical social mobility on an all-inclusive scale thus led to that emphasis upon individualism in marriage which plays such an important role in our social pattern today.

Such a mobile society exacts certain penalties as measured in family solidarity. The possibility of both vertical and horizontal mobility means that the family tends to be relatively unstable, as compared to a fixed and immobile social order. As Sorokin points out: ". . . in a society where the family is unstable, the marriage is easily dissolved;

intermarriages between different strata are common; the education of the children after their early period goes on outside the family . . . there cannot be . . . a sacredness of the family, or family pride, or a high social evaluation of the family institution." [13]

In those parts of the Old World where the traditional social structure exists relatively unchanged, the patriarchal family is the supreme social unit, class lines are well defined, the new husband and wife settle either on the parental farm or in close proximity to it, and the ties that bind the family together are very strong. Family relationships under such a social system would be extremely unsatisfactory to the romantic lover, who could not bear the thought of having his wife picked for him by someone else. Such old-fashioned family solidarity and contemporary individual choice are largely incompatible. Compromises and adjustments can, of course, be made. But the fact remains that, in our mobile and individualistic society, we cannot eat our cake of family solidarity and have the shining frosting of romantic love, too.

Out of this mobile society has come a great hunger for love, personal intimacy, and the complete fusion of personality that can come only in marriage. The pioneer had an almost organic need for a wife whom he had chosen from all others to share his hardships, comfort him, be his constant companion, tend him when he was sick, bear his children, and go hand in hand with him to the grave. In much the same way, this craving for individual attention has manifested itself in the large city where it has interacted upon the national pattern already established by the frontier way of life. Millions of young men and women in the cities are cut off from the intimacy of close home ties; even if they still inhabit the family apartment or tenement, they are only tiny human islands in a vast and anonymous sea of strangers.

The desire for a soul mate, a dream girl, or a dream lover who shall appear out of the crowd at a dance hall, a movie, at the next counter in the store, or the next bench in the factory—such a desire is strong in a people cut off by a restless and mobile society from much of the intimate companionship possible in a rural and settled community. To these millions of lonesome boys and girls, the prospect of a romantic marriage is the one exciting possibility in their lives. They eagerly devour every song, story, or movie that strengthens this conception and gives them hope that the great moment will some day come to them.

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[13] Sorokin, *Social Mobility*, p. 185.

The Frontier and the Patriarchal Family

In his celebrated essay on the "Significance of the Frontier in American History," Professor Turner made the following observation on the relationship between social mobility and individualism in early America: ". . . the most important effect of the frontier has been in the promotion of democracy . . . the frontier is productive of individualism. Complex society is precipitated by the wilderness into a kind of primitive organization based on the family. The tendency is anti-social. . . . The frontier individualism has from the beginning promoted democracy." [14]

The atomization of society resulting from three centuries of social movement was inevitably communicated to the family. The traditional structure of the European family depended for its survival upon continuous settlement in one position, both physical and social. For generation after generation, the family stayed in the same physical place and in the same relative position in the social structure. Family solidarity based upon such continuity of occupation and function was out of the question in frontier America. The family clan of relatives, deriving its central authority from the patriarch, was almost destroyed by the movement toward the West. Such an organization of society today survives, in an emasculated form, only in certain remote areas of the Southern and Eastern back country, where colonial folkways linger on.[15]

The breakdown in the traditional familial structure was evident at an early date in the development of America, as generation after generation of young couples continued to move out from under the parental wing. As a result of this extreme and continued horizontal mobility, the family became a more equalitarian institution, based upon the equal cooperation of all adult members and looking for authority to a joint family council rather than to the father. Under such circumstances, the choice of the new daughter-in-law or son-in-law came to be made by those most directly interested—namely, the son and daughter themselves. The children then received the parental blessing, plus an axe and a team of oxen, and they started west. They were going to spend the rest of their lives with the person of their choice, and any undue family interference would have been neither offered nor accepted.

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[14] Turner, *The Frontier in American History*, p. 30.

[15] Willystine Goodsell, *A History of Marriage and the Family* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1934), p. 459.

The patriarchal system, as noted, evolved under European conditions, where the same family cultivated the same property for generations, where horizontal mobility was rare and vertical mobility almost nonexistent. The control exerted by the father arose in large part from the fact that he was able substantially to control the economic destiny of his children at every stage in their lives. In many cases, the children lived in the parental home until the death of the father, at which time the family dominance reverted to the "children," who, by this time, were often grown men. In other cases, the children lived in separate houses on the same property, where they were equally under the domination of the father. In still other cases, the children lived in the same small village, where the tightly-knit organization of the family continued to define their behavior as long as they lived. Under these conditions, the patriarchal family system became so entrenched in the mores that it seemed the only possible way of life.

Such an organization of society, in somewhat modified form, was brought to this country from England and the Continent by the early groups that settled the New England and Middle Atlantic States. In certain areas of the eastern seaboard, where traditional customs still obtain among the old families, remnants of this patriarchalism remain. Antiquated maiden aunts and doddering great-uncles maintain the family genealogy and keep track of the births, deaths, and divorces among the younger generation. This form of family organization never formed the pattern of America as a whole and is today a faded and somewhat pathetic anachronism.

The democratic and individualistic character of the early American family was particularly striking to certain observant foreigners who came from a society in which the patriarchal tradition maintained a strong position. In his comments on the American family, de Tocqueville remarked: "In America, the family, in the Roman and aristocratic signification of the word, does not exist. All that remains of it are a few vestiges in the first years of childhood, when the father exercises, without opposition, that absolute domestic authority which the feebleness of his children renders necessary, and which their interest, as well as his own incontestable superiority, warrants. But as soon as the young American approaches manhood, the ties of filial obedience are relaxed day by day: master of his thoughts, he is soon master of his conduct." [16] As soon as a boy was strong enough to swing an axe and acquire the lore of the farm or the forest from his father or older brother, he was, for all practical purposes, a man. One of the most delicious prerogatives of manhood in a democratic society is the ability to choose your own wife. It is certain that this prerogative was widely exercised in frontier America, where it became an integral part of the mores of a democratic and equalitarian people.

Sentimentalists and emotional reactionaries may bemoan the passing of the large family, which clung so tenaciously to the soil of the Old World for centuries and which still plays a central part in the life of such an essentially peasant country as France. Under the social circumstances of a highly mobile and democratic America, however, no other kind of family could possibly have evolved than the equalitarian and loosely knit organization which we know today. Romantic love, with its extreme emphasis upon the choice of the individual, is an essential part of this social pattern. Such a way of life emphasizes the personal relationships between husband and wife and their own young children, rather than those between the father and his grown sons and daughters. Romantic love is a democratic manifestation that has grown out of a democratic way of life. The excesses of romanticism are the excesses of democracy. We cannot have the one without the other. Those who would do away with romantic love as the basis of marriage would return to an authoritarian society, based upon an authoritarian relationship between father and children. Such a reactionary step is utterly out of the question in an America which is on the road to more, rather than less, democracy.

The Frontier and the Status of Women

The mobility of the frontier thus combined with the capitalistic and Protestant heritage of the English settlers to produce an individualism that communicated itself to all phases of American life, including individual choice in marriage. The same general combination of circumstances brought about the high status of women and their relative parity in marital choice. The social position of the colonial and frontier wife was a secure and impressive one, based upon the solid fact of her indispensability to the business of living. She was an equal in the family equation, even as she took an equal part in the decision that originally formed the particular family. Her choice of her husband was as important as his choice of her; gone was the patriarchal system of marital choice in which mother and daughter were merely quiescent pawns in a game played by the men.

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[16] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (Cambridge, 1863), II, 233.

It is true that the law, customarily laggard, maintained the legal inferiority of women long after their practical equality had been demonstrated in millions of frontier cabins. In the choice of a husband, however, the women of early America played a role of equality and thus acquired that virtual apotheosis as sweetheart, wife, and mother which is such a striking contemporary characteristic of the marital pattern.

In his comments upon the reciprocal relationship between democracy and every other phase of American culture, de Tocqueville remarked that "The Americans . . . have found out that, in a democracy, the independence of individuals cannot fail to be very great, youth premature, tastes ill-restrained, customs fleeting, public opinion often unsettled and powerless, paternal authority weak, and marital authority contested." [17] After this succinct characterization of the democratic process, with all its virtues and faults, the Frenchman continued his description of the frontier woman: "As they could not prevent her virtue from being exposed to frequent danger, they determined that she should know how best to defend it; and more reliance was placed on the free vigor of her will than on safeguards which have been shaken or overthrown." [18] Rather than weaken the confidence of the young girl in her own strength of character, Americans have attempted in every way to enhance this self-confidence: "Far from hiding the corruptions of the world from her," de Tocqueville concludes, "they prefer that she should see them at once, and train herself to shun them; and they hold it of more importance to protect her conduct, than to be over-scrupulous of the innocence of her thoughts." [19]

The mobility of the frontier further contributed to the position of American women by introducing certain homely variations on the mechanics of supply and demand. Many women went out with their menfolk to the frontier; the fortitude of the pioneer wife and mother is one of the great epics of our westward expansion. All the pioneers, however, did not have their wives with them; besides, the mortality of pioneer women was notoriously high. Childbirth under the most primitive conditions combined with sheer physical exhaustion to render the life of the frontier wife a short one, filled with travail and tribulation. The result was a constant shortage of women in the frontier settlements, which was met by sporadic individual attempts to transport spinsters from the East to areas where their faded charms would be the object of earnest competition among the wife-hungry males.

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[17] de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, II, 242-43.

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 243.

[19] *Ibid.*

It would be grossly unfair to the daughter, wife, and mother of the pioneer family, however, to imply that the only reason women were esteemed was because they were few and far between. On the contrary, the heroic struggle of the pioneer wife who fought, lived, and died beside her husband established and perpetuated the role of the woman who was the equal of her man. Thus, "The elevation that came in the status of woman was earned by devotion, labor, courage, self-control, heroism. . . . Reciprocity in the marriage relation was the logical consequence where women bore a man's share in the struggle for existence." [20] This reciprocity was part of individual choice in courtship. For generations, young men and women in America have chosen each other.

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THE FAMILY AND DEMOCRACY

THE AMERICAN SCENE has offered a happy combination of circumstances for the achievement of a high degree of political democracy. In an expanding economy there was a nice correlation between freedom of economic opportunities and the growth of political liberties. The opening of the twentieth century saw the end of the frontier with its manifold implications for American life.[1] The nation was drawn into world affairs at the same time the continent was settled, a process aided by scientific advances that tended to make the world shrink in size. In addition, the competition for world markets, the growth of great industrial combines, the transition to finance capitalism, the divorce of management from ownership, the depletion of natural resources, and the declining curve of population growth have focussed public attention on the necessity of economic democracy as an essential corollary of political democracy.

The Nature of the Democratic Ideal

The democratic credo has been an integral part of the American ethos. In the development of this society, the changes in the larger culture have been reflected in the microcosm of the family. The same forces have appeared in the status and relationships of the family as in the revolutionary gospel of liberty and equality on the larger stage. The "rights" of the individual have gradually ceased to refer only to the man, as woman has insisted on her recognition as a person. Similarly, the growth of democratic ideology recognizes the child as an individual, free from the capricious and arbitrary dictates of its biological progenitors, and potentially a free citizen of a free commonwealth. These and other aspects of American democracy will be considered in terms of the family.

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[1] Frederick J. Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1921).

The democratic credo has had derivative effects on other aspects of marriage and the family. The process of courtship, as noted in the preceding chapter, is highly democratic, implying as it does that the girl is an individual in her own right who must be constantly consulted. The democratic courtship relationship is one in which two persons with equal rights and personalities come together to work out their common destiny without interference by state, church, or parents. To an increasing extent, the girl has educational advantages equal to those of her suitor and can make up her mind as well as he can. The democratic ideal of free choice is an integral part of the process by which the American family is founded.

The democratic foundation is further strengthened by the growing economic independence of women, which constitutes one of the most important single changes undergone by the family in the past century. Today, marriage must offer more than mere "board and keep" to the girl who has learned to make her own way in the world. If the marriage proves unsuccessful, the knowledge that she can maintain herself economically makes the wife less willing to endure such a relationship. The emancipation of women also makes the family a more democratic relationship, based upon the mutual agreement of two persons, each of whom can make an independent contribution to economic life. In contrast to the time when there was no place for women outside the family, modern society has brought a democratic individuality to the marriage relationship.

The economic independence of women has had another effect upon the stability of the family, which grows directly out of the individualistic attitude toward marriage. Since she is no longer obligated to look toward marriage for economic security, the young woman looks to it for other satisfactions, particularly those of personal happiness. She expects something very special in the way of satisfaction of such needs, something which will so fill her life that she will willingly submit to economic subordination when she decides to work no longer. This subordination may be something new in her life, since she has hitherto often been on an equal economic footing with men of her own age. She has experienced the satisfactions of virtual independence, particularly when she has cut herself off from her own family. In an earlier day, she had no preliminary period of freedom and hence accepted the dependence of marriage with comparative equanimity. Today, there must be a considered compensation before she will voluntarily and permanently abandon this hard-won freedom.

The democratic, equalitarian, and individualistic family is the product of a society that stresses these traits in all phases of life. In a democracy, marriage is an individual matter, and the individual bows to no external power in exercising his freedom of choice. In view of the secure place of democratic marriage in the hearts of the American people, it is doubtful whether they would sanction any interference with their cherished traditions by church or state, even if a technical increase in family solidarity resulted. We apparently prefer democracy and individualism in our family relationships, even though they imply a correspondingly high rate of family disorganization. We may further explore some of the implications of democratic individualism in the relationships of marriage and the family.

Legal Equality of Women

More than a century ago, the American woman issued her Declaration of Independence. This momentous event occurred on July 19, 1848, when the first convention on behalf of Women's Rights was held in Seneca Falls, New York. This meeting and those that succeeded it produced a program with three primary objectives: (1) to free the persons and property of married women from the absolute control of their husbands; (2) to open to all women opportunities for a sound and liberal higher education; and (3) to secure for women full political rights. The degree to which these objectives have been achieved in so short a time is truly remarkable.

In the early days of our national life, woman's status continued to reflect Old World backgrounds and traditions. Her place was in the home, but even there her authority was definitely subordinated to that of the husband and patriarch. Though it was not literally true in all respects that "husband and wife were one person, and the person was the husband," yet in many ways it was all too true. In 1845, one writer stated that the power of the husband over the person of his wife was such that "he may claim her society altogether . . . that she cannot sue alone; that she cannot execute a deed or valid conveyance without the concurrence of her husband . . . [and that] the personal property of the wife . . . vests at marriage, immediately and absolutely, in the husband." [2] In Massachusetts before 1840, a woman could not legally be treasurer of her own sewing society unless some man were responsible for her. A husband could claim the wages of the wife earned outside the home.[3]

At common law there was no question about the superior power of the father over the control and custody of the children. During his lifetime he could legally apprentice his children at an early age, and the mother could say nothing; also, he could will them to the care of another without the consent of the mother.[4] Today, no state allows the father to will his child to another without the mother's valid consent.[5] It is generally accepted today that the parents share equally in the control and custody of their children. In some states, there are certain modifications that give the father a theoretical, if not always practical, preference. In proceedings leading to divorce, present-day courts tend to regard parents on an equal plane in awarding the custody of the children. The welfare of the child is given primary consideration in such awards.[6]

The gains of women in other respects have been tremendous. In all of the states, the wife owns after marriage the clothes and other personal property which she owned prior thereto. In most instances, the wife is entitled to her own earnings outside the home, and such earnings are not liable for her husband's debts. Her powers of contracting independently are generally recognized, although this privilege is often hedged about with certain restrictions. In most states, a wife can engage in her own business, employ her own funds, and act on her own liability.[7] It is the general practice now to grant mother and father equal rights of inheritance from a deceased child.

In the "community-property" states, each spouse has a half interest in all the property acquired after marriage, even though the control of such property during the joint lives of the spouses may reside in the husband. In the majority of states, the mother shares equally in the child's earnings. In no state is the wife entitled to determine the choice of the family home, except that in some cases she is allowed to establish a separate domicile for voting and for eligibility to public office.[8] These advances are a far cry from the climate of public opinion prevalent a century ago. At a Women's Rights meeting in Philadelphia in 1854, an objector from the audience shouted: "Let women first prove they have souls: both the Church and the State deny it." [9]

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[2] Quoted by Willystine Goodsell, *A History of Marriage and the Family* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1934), p. 465.

[3] Arthur W. Calhoun, *A Social History of the American Family* (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1945) II, 94-95.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] United States Department of Labor, Women's Bureau, *The Legal Status of Women in the United States of America, as of January 1, 1948*, Bulletin of the Women's Bureau, No. 157. (Washington, 1951).

[6] Carl A. Weinman, "The Trial Judge Awards Custody," *Law and Contemporary Problems*, Summer 1944, X, 721-36.

[7] Women's Bureau, Bulletin No. 157, p. 44.

The past decade has witnessed an acceleration of state legislation eliminating survivals of the common law discriminations against woman in her exercise of legal and property rights. Doubtless World War II, with its demands on the woman-power of the mobilized nation, had much to do with this development. So remarkable have been the changes achieved in the present century that by 1948 the Women's Bureau was able to say: "1. As a member of the political society in its governing function, woman stands practically on an equal footing with man; 2. As a member of a governed society of individuals, her position in many respects is comparable with that of man, in a few respects it may be considered superior to man's, and in a few respects it is inferior to that occupied by man." [10]

Unquestionably it is this last-named consideration that has led the militant champions of women's rights to continue their struggle (covering three decades) to get the United States Congress to pass an Equal Rights amendment to the Constitution. On two occasions in recent years, they have succeeded in getting it to the floor of the Senate. The first was in 1946, when the vote was 38 in favor and 35 opposed. Because of the necessity for a two-thirds majority, the amendment failed.[11] On January 25, 1950, an amendment providing "That equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex," was again presented for a vote. At this time, an amendment to the amendment was proposed by United States Senator Carl Hayden to the effect that: "The provisions of this article shall not be construed to impair any rights, benefits, or exemptions now or hereafter conferred by law upon persons of the female sex." The Equal Rights Amendment with the Hayden modification was then passed by a vote of 63 to 19.[12]

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[8] *Ibid.*, p. 20.

[9] Quoted by Calhoun, *A Social History of the American Family*, II, 125.

[10] Women's Bureau, Bulletin No. 157, p. 19.

[11] *Congressional Record*, July 19, 1946. Vol. 92, No. 142, p. 9535.

The discussions in connection with both these votes revealed a serious division of opinion concerning the merits of such an amendment. Many prominent women leaders and progressive senators, sympathetic to women's rights, believe that full legal equality is not desirable. This opposition reflects the fear that full legal equality may lead to the abolition of those laws which have been enacted in the past fifty years for the protection of women. This legislation has been passed expressly to discriminate *in favor* of women by governing such matters as minimum wages, minimum hours, night work, engaging in certain hazardous occupations, maternity leaves, and related subjects.[13] It was with the idea of safeguarding such favorable legislation that the Hayden proposal was accepted.

Educational Equality of Women

The general attitude in colonial America toward the education of women was that such instruction should be confined to household duties. The variety of arguments employed by those who would restrict even elementary public instruction of females sounds strange in the twentieth century. Genuinely sincere and honest people questioned whether girls had the innate ability to respond to any education. Others advanced arguments such as: (a) to teach girls to write would encourage them to forge their husbands' and fathers' signatures; (b) to teach them geography would make them discontented with their lot and they would desire to wander; (c) most of the subjects they would be taught would unfit them for their primary responsibility of housewife and mother.[14]

In spite of the tardy recognition of the right of girls to receive an elementary education, the democratic fervor of the eighteenth century brought with it the admission of girls to the elementary and in some cases to the secondary schools. When the step had been taken, it was logical that woman should also demand to be admitted on an equal basis to institutions of higher education. In spite of misgivings on the part of some people in influential positions, Oberlin College in

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[12] *Congressional Record*, January 25, 1950, Vol. 96, Part I, pp. 872-73.

[13] "Senate's Ladies' Day," *Life*, February 13, 1950, pp. 16 ff.

[14] Goodsell, *A History of Marriage and the Family*, p. 467.

Ohio opened its doors to both boys and girls in 1833. At the same time, Mary Lyon was carrying on a vigorous campaign in Massachusetts for the establishment of a female school of higher learning, which resulted in the opening of Mount Holyoke Seminary in 1837. In 1855, when the regents of the state of New York gave to a woman's college the right to grant degrees and offer courses similar to those given men, the presidents of other institutions were horrified. One college president wrote: "A few dreamers, I understand, are trying to develop a college for women in the village of Elmira. The idea of giving a woman a man's education is too ridiculous to appear credible." [15]

This was not an isolated instance of opposition to the new movement. Countless voices were raised against this degradation of womanhood. Groves summarizes some of the reasons advanced: "Feminine ambitions were the abandonment of divine decree registered in the physiological structure of the woman. They led toward the hardening of female character, the loss of sex appeal, the throwing away of the instinctive satisfaction of motherhood, the surrender of domestic companionableness for the deceptions and disillusionments that followed the attempt to imitate men. The penalties of such ambitions were race suicide, physical and nervous ill-health, loss of marriage opportunity, and social disorganization." [16] One critic stated that: "For our part we are convinced that too much has been done already in forcing girls through courses of hard studies, and that any further steps in that direction will necessitate hospitals and asylums alongside of Colleges for women." [17] No less a personage than President Eliot of Harvard is reported to have "shrunk from taking his part of the responsibility of introducing the education of women in Harvard College." [18]

While the opponents raged, the struggle went forward with victory after victory for the women. Vassar was chartered in 1861 and opened in 1865. Wellesley was chartered as a seminary in 1870 and empowered to grant degrees in 1877, Smith College in 1871, and Bryn Mawr in 1880. The University of Michigan was opened to women in 1870. Even Harvard, President Eliot notwithstanding, had its Radcliffe College in 1894.

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[15] Quoted by Calhoun, *A Social History of the American Family*, II, 90.

[16] Ernest R. Groves, *The American Woman* (New York: Emerson Books, Inc., 1944), p. 313.

[17] Quoted by Groves, *ibid.*, pp. 314-15.

[18] Groves, *ibid.*, p. 319.

Those who resented the thought of granting women a higher education would be surprised to see the present figures for enrollment in American colleges. Of approximately 2,600,000 students resident in a recent year in colleges and universities, professional schools, junior colleges, and teachers colleges, both publicly and privately controlled, about 780,000 were women.[19] Full-time members of the faculties of such schools totaled 196,000, of which number 53,000 belonged to the sex that a few decades ago could allegedly undertake higher education only at the risk of losing its "feminine graces." Although complete democratic equality has not been accomplished, woman has made a phenomenal advance.[20]

Political Equality of Women

The Seneca Falls and other early Women's Rights meetings made much of the familiar slogan, "taxation without representation." If women were to be denied the right to vote and be represented in their government, they should not be taxed to support it. On August 18, 1920, Tennessee became the 36th state to ratify the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution. This aspect of woman's struggle for democratic equality was concluded.

It is an interesting commentary on Frederick Jackson Turner's thesis on the influence of the frontier in American life to observe that western states took the lead in granting suffrage rights to women. While they were still territories, Wyoming in 1869 and Utah in 1870 granted equal voting rights to women. Colorado followed in 1893 and Idaho in 1896. The agitation gathered such momentum that in the decade prior to the adoption of the federal amendment a number of states by popular vote decided to give women this right.

Of the fifteen states that had passed such legislation prior to 1918, only New York and Michigan were located east of the Mississippi river. Washington in 1910, California in 1911, Oregon, Kansas, and Arizona in 1912, Nevada and Montana in 1914—this list substantiates the contention that much progressive legislation has come from the West, as a result of the leveling tendencies of the frontier. Where women are scarce in numbers, where judgments are based on the dignity and worth of the person irrespective of sex, and where status is not assigned but achieved—under such conditions egalitarianism will thrive.

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[19] United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1951*, (Washington, 1951), p. 120.

[20] See also Bureau of the Census, "School Enrollment: October 1951," *Current Population Reports—Population Characteristics*, Series P-20, No. 40, July 21, 1952.

The liberation of American women should not, however, be ascribed entirely to the influence of the frontier. Other factors were also operative in the process. One of the reasons for the subordinate position of woman a century ago was the fact that the husband was the breadwinner and the wife was economically dependent upon him. As the economic opportunities for self-sufficiency have increased, a corresponding development of equality has followed.

Economic Independence of Women

The introduction of the factory system into New England occurred in the textile industry, which was well suited to women workers because of their adeptness in acquiring the necessary skills. From the point of view of the employer, there was an advantage to be gained in offering incentives to women to enter the new mills because they would work for smaller wages than men for the same kinds and amounts of work. "Women formed," remarks Calhoun, "two-thirds to three-fourths, and in some places as much as nine-tenths, of the total number of factory operatives in the first half of the century. Many of the early mill-workers were country girls who simply came in for a time in order to earn a little money, often for their wedding outfits." [21] Only a small proportion of the early factory workers were married women endeavoring to combine home-making with working for wages. This does not alter the fundamental fact that, once the tradition had become established that woman could be economically independent, this was the beginning of the end of her subordination to man.[22]

The past eighty years have witnessed a speeding-up of the process which had its beginnings in the first half of the nineteenth century. Decade by decade, the number of women wageworkers has been increasing at a rate faster than that for the population as a whole. There are more than nine times as many women in the labor force today as there were eighty years ago.[23] In this same period the population has increased approximately fourfold.[24]

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[21] Calhoun, *A Social History of the American Family*, II, 175.

[22] Groves, *The American Woman*, p. 128.

During World War II, eleven million men in their productive years were removed temporarily from the labor force for military service. Women were drawn in greater numbers than ever before into the labor force. At the peak of war production in 1943, the number of employed women was slightly over 18,000,000, or one-third of the total labor force.[25] Many of these women returned to their homes at the conclusion of hostilities. Many others experienced for the first time the satisfactions of economic self-sufficiency and remained in the labor market. In April, 1952, 30.4 per cent of all employed persons were women, a ratio that approximated the figure at the peak of World War II.[26] Woman has definitely advanced her status and has demonstrated that she can be economically self-sufficient. This gain in turn promotes an attitude of independence in other relations between the sexes.

Man lost another traditional advantage as a result of the war experience. This was the age-old notion that however far woman might go in invading many occupations previously reserved for men, there were still certain activities for which she was unfitted by nature. The stimulus of war demands resulted in throwing open to women one after another of these occupations previously considered "for men only." Personnel managers initially complained that the manpower shortage forced them to employ women workers on jobs for which they were not suited. Six months after the women had been employed, the same officials reluctantly admitted that the impossible female workers were doing as well as, and in certain respects better than, the men. This was true in the manufacturing and mechanical industries, trade, transportation, and other fields in which women had had little experience prior to the war. Only in the heaviest occupations and in the extractive industries did the previous attitudes persist.[27]

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[23] United States Department of Labor, Women's Bureau, 1952 *Handbook of Facts on Women Workers* (Washington, 1952), Bulletin No. 242, p. 1.

[24] *Ibid.*

[25] "Effects of War Casualties on Economic Responsibilities of Women," *Monthly Labor Review*, February 1946, LXII, 181-86.

[26] Women's Bureau, 1952 *Handbook of Facts on Women Workers, op. cit.*

[27] Mary Robinson, "Woman Workers in Two Wars," *Monthly Labor Review*, October 1943, LVII, 650-71.

In the century following the Seneca Falls Convention, the American experiment with democracy has thus been accompanied by the liberation of the female sex from a long period of male dominance. The original demand was for equality of legal personality and property rights. This was soon extended to higher education, the franchise, and economic rights. The American woman has not yet achieved complete equality in social, political, legal, and economic respects. But the trend is unmistakable and the achievements thus far have been a striking practical demonstration of the democratic credo.

The Emancipation of Childhood [28]

The form of the family brought to the New World was the patriarchate which had reigned in the Old World. Minor modifications occurred over the centuries in the exercise of absolute paternal authority. Yet just as the wife occupied an inferior position to the husband, so the child was regarded as subordinate in every respect to the elders. Not only did the settlers bring with them their established family pattern but, especially in the North, they also imported a Puritan-Calvinistic view of the universe. There was clearly present the conception that society should be governed by divine decree, specifically those decrees dictated by the Deity to the ancient Hebrews.

One such decree, "Honor thy father and mother," was not interpreted in those days merely as giving respect to parents. Obedience of the strictest sort was expected of children. As Calhoun points out: "Parents were addressed as 'esteemed parent' or 'honored sir and madam.' A pert child was generally thought to be delirious or bewitched. . . . Stern and arbitrary command compelled obedience, submissive and generally complete." [29] The legal right of the father to exact even the death penalty from a disobedient or rebellious son was a direct carry-over from the superordinate-subordinate roles of the ancient patriarchal family. Although history does not record a single instance of a colonial father exercising this legal right, this does not change the fact that he enjoyed such a prerogative.[30]

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[28] For an extensive statement of this general subject, see James H. S. Bossard, *The Sociology of Child Development* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1948), Part VII, "The Changing Status of Childhood."

[29] Calhoun, *A Social History of the American Family*, I, 111-12.

[30] *Ibid.*, p. 121.

In a predominantly agrarian society, the household furnished the child with vocational education. Early American society not only was agrarian but also had other characteristics that required the economic cooperation of the child at an early age. The practical exigencies of a wilderness made work a necessity for all. To these concerns were added the Puritan ethic that idleness was conducive to sin and therefore displeasing to the Deity. Hence each new child was not only a mouth to be fed but also a new pair of hands to work in a common enterprise. So ingrained were these conceptions that even today some opponents of child labor laws base their opposition on the idea that idleness is the Devil's workshop and that unremitting toil is as important as ever.

The early insistence of the colonial father that the child be taught work habits did not imply any lack of appreciation of formal education. Every child was expected to become literate, and the later insistence on universal education at public expense was therefore an extension of the ideas of the nation's founders. Although literacy was highly regarded, the period of formal education was not an extended one except for those entering the ministry or the law. This lack of necessity for a prolonged formal education and the early work habits of the child led to a shortening of the development of maturity. Marriages occurred at an earlier age, more nearly coincident with biological maturity than at the present time. At sixteen a young man was regarded as capable of performing the functions of husband, father, and breadwinner. At that age he paid taxes and was eligible for military service in the colonial forces.

As with the struggle of women, the first half of the nineteenth century represented the transition between the old attitude of complete subordination of the child and the present democratic position. Calhoun reports an English woman writing in 1848 that: "the indulgence which parents in the United States permit to their children is not seen in England; the child is too early his own master; as soon as he can sit at table he chooses his own food, and as soon as he can speak argues with his parents on the propriety or impropriety of their directions." [31] This aspect of American life struck an observer from another society. In our own society, Emerson is quoted to the effect that "It was a misfortune to have been born in an age when children were nothing and to have spent mature life in an age when children were everything."[32]

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[31] Calhoun, *A Social History of the American Family*, II, 67.

The quotation from Emerson represents an exaggeration, to be sure. Nevertheless, here was the beginning of that process which has led the twentieth century to be characterized as the "Century of the Child." The Midcentury White House Conference on Children and Youth which met in Washington in December, 1950, represented the fifth such decennial assembly to consider the problems of children in a democratic social order. To these assemblies come representatives of all organizations in the nation interested in the problems of children and youth. The reports stress the recent achievements in the democratization of opportunity for each child and draw up a blueprint for the further implementation of the democratic credo. The following discussion will be concerned with a few of these areas: (a) the contemporary definitions of the legal rights of the child; (b) the equalization of educational opportunities; (c) measures for safeguarding the health and physical well-being of the child; (d) the prohibition of child labor; and (e) the changing treatment of the child of the unmarried mother.

Law and the Democratic Ideal

The past hundred years have witnessed striking changes in the legal definitions of the rights and obligations of parents and the corresponding rights and duties of the child. The emphasis was formerly placed on the *rights* of the parents—especially the father—with a kind of hands-off policy when it came to the *obligations* of the parents. At the present time, the emphasis is placed on the welfare of the child, which means that the state has increasingly placed itself *in loco parentis* in insisting that the obligations of the parents shall be discharged.

Various explanations for this development have been offered. In a simpler society, the family could provide for the educational, protective, health, and other needs of the young. In an urban, industrial society the larger community must provide such services because the family cannot supply them. A second reason may be that, except for the postwar upsurge in the birth rate, the relative proportion of young children in the population has been declining. One of the consequences of a declining birth rate is to make those children who are born a more precious asset because of their relative scarcity. Finally, a corollary of the democratic ideology is that the child shall be treated as a person in his own right. The very fact that the child is extremely dependent means that a democratic social system has an obligation to insure measures for his protection.

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[32] *Ibid.*

At common law, the parents (meaning the father) had virtually unlimited rights to the control, custody, and services of the children. Such rights would logically carry with them corresponding responsibilities for protection and support. Yet the obligations for support were primarily of a moral rather than a legal nature. It was observed above that the absolute rights of the father have given way to a relative equality of control and custody between father and mother. At the same time, decisions of courts of law and equity plus legislative enactments have created the presumption that the welfare of the child is central in questions involving such control and custody. There is practical legislative uniformity in the states making the parents liable for the support of their children, however widely the particulars of the laws may vary.[33]

Contemporary courts are constantly faced with problems involving the custody of children. Where the problem arises by reason of parental neglect or because of the delinquency of the child, the juvenile court has come to assume jurisdiction. The procedures in such courts involve the awarding of the custody of the child in such a way that the best interests of the child and the community will be served. Mentally or physically disabled children, children of parents one or both of whom have died, and children of divorced or separated parents are additional instances of court concern for the awarding of custody. Starting with the premise that a reasonably good parent-child home environment is preferred to any other arrangement, the courts determine whether the child shall be in the custody of the father, the mother, or some other designated individual or agency.[34]

English common law, building on the inheritance from feudal times, gave the preference in inheritance to the oldest son. Further preference was given to male as opposed to female heirs. At the time of American colonization, the systems of entail and primogeniture were well established in England, where they maintained the permanence of family estates, titles, and honors. The leveling tendencies of the New World, plus the fact that land was plentiful and inhabitants scarce, produced modifications in these systems. Today there is no vestige left of the aristocratic traditions of entail and primogeniture. Children in all states share equally in inheritance, regardless of age or sex.[35]

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[33] Chester G. Vernier, *American Family Laws* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1931–1938), IV, 4-5.

[34] Helen I. Clarke, *Social Legislation* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1940), pp. 210 ff.

The right of the father at common law to punish the child was recognized, with the implied qualification that excessive or immoderate cruelty was prohibited. Today the mother shares with the father in the privilege of correction and punishment. It is difficult to say what the criminal liability of parents may be at the present time for inflicting unreasonable punishments, unless permanent injury ensues. Few cases actually come before the courts, since all the states grant authority to certain courts to deprive the parents of custody of the children under given circumstances. The wilfully abused child now has recourse to the juvenile courts; society thus provides that the ancient prerogatives of the parents shall not be exercised to the detriment of the child.[36]

The duty of the parents to provide education for the child is long established. It is included in the common-law requisitions for parents to supply the *necessaries*. This duty has been taken out of the hands of parents and intrusted to the public school system, where attendance is required of all children between certain ages designated by statute. The laws also provide for penalties against parents who wilfully refuse to send their children to school. These laws represent invasions of former parental rights, since they deprive the parents of the services of their children during school hours, at the same time forcing them to maintain the children while the larger society educates them.[37]

This movement to free the child from rigid patriarchal family controls and to recognize that he is a concern of the entire society has been accompanied by new definitions of the child's obligations to the parents. The child formerly had no legal duty to support his parents even though they might be incapable of supporting themselves. In a majority of the states it is now required that children be liable for the support of their parents. The statutes usually provide that the parents must be poor, in need, or incapable of their own support, and that the child must have adequate means to give the requisite assistance.[38]

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[35] Vernier, *American Family Laws*, IV, 112 ff.

[36] Clarke, *Social Legislation*, pp. 220 ff.

[37] Vernier, *American Family Laws*, IV, 63 ff.

Education and the Democratic Ideal

The successful operation of a democratic system of government implies a literate citizenry. The trend in American society has accordingly been in the direction of extending this opportunity (and obligation) to all children, especially as far as elementary and secondary school education is concerned. In 1870, 59.3 per cent of the population in the age group 5 to 17 years was enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools. By 1948 this percentage had increased to slightly under 80 per cent.[39] Four out of five young people are attending school and for a greater number of days per year than ever before. The democratic belief in universal access to formal education is becoming a reality.

Both the quality and quantity of educational opportunity, to be sure, vary from region to region throughout the United States. The state of Mississippi spends $71.44 annually to send each pupil to full-time day school, as compared with New York State's expenditure of $258.60 for similar purposes.[40] The states with the highest proportion of their population in the age group 5 to 17 years likewise tend to be those with a small per capita income. "In 1945, the South had 27.0 per cent of its population in the ages 5 through 17, as contrasted with a national average of 22.7 per cent and with 20.2 per cent in the Northeast. In that year, the South had a birth rate of 24.7 per thousand civilians while the nation averaged 21.5 and the Northeast had only 19.0." [41] The southern states are also lowest in terms of annual individual income. This differential rate of responsibility and economic ability has been at the basis of the arguments for federal aid to states in elementary and secondary education.

Just as states differ in their economic ability to provide educational opportunities for their citizens, so individual families differ widely in the accessibility of their members to the facilities provided at public expense. "It is a distressing fact," says the President's Commission on Higher Education, "that in 1945, when the total national income was far greater than in any previous period in our history, half of the children under 18 were growing up in families which had a cash income of $2,530 or less. The educational significance of these facts is heightened by the relationship that exists between income and birth rate. Fertility is highest in the families with lowest incomes." [42] Mere access to formal education is not enough when half the children live in the largest families with the lowest per capita income. This situation is presented graphically in Figure 1. Many such children will go to work as soon as the school-attendance laws permit.

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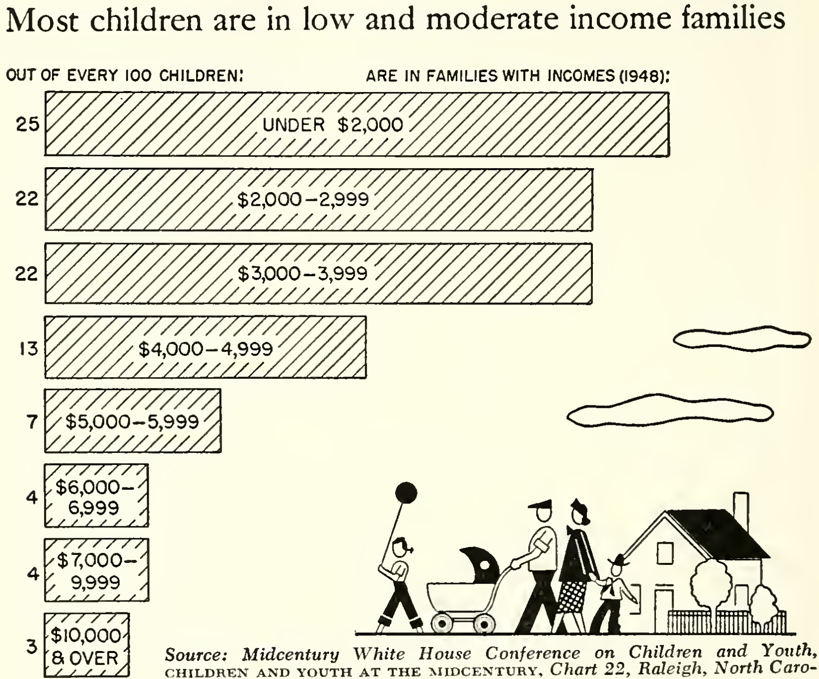
[38] *Ibid.*, pp. 93 ff.

[39] *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1951, p. 112.

[40] *Ibid.*, p. 116.

[41] *Higher Education for American Democracy*, A Report of the President's Commission on Higher Education (Washington, December 1947), I, 30-31.



Source: Midcentury White House Conference on Children and Youth, CHILDREN AND YOUTH AT THE MIDCENTURY, *Chart 22, Raleigh, North Carolina: Health Publications Institute, Inc., 1951.*

Fig. 1.

Compulsory school attendance laws and free education, however, do operate to keep young people in school at least up to a certain age or grade-level. Beyond this time, all children do not have an equal opportunity to secure as much formal schooling as their potentialities appear to warrant. The President's Commission took the results of the Army General Classification Test given to 10 million inductees during the war and equated these with the American Council on Education tests given to students entering college. The Commission concluded that 49 per cent of the population has the mental ability to complete 14 years of schooling, and 32 per cent has the ability to complete an advanced liberal or specialized professional training.[43] The Commission estimated that in 1952 the number capable of satisfactorily pursuing higher education would be nearly 4 million.[44] This figure is more than 50 per cent greater than the number actually enrolled in colleges in 1952. Although much progress has been made in the democratization of educational opportunity, there is still a great challenge to the American ideal in the field of higher education.

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[42] *Ibid.*, p. 28.

Child Health and the Democratic Ideal

A minimal requirement of the democratic credo would seem to be that every child have an equal chance to pass through the first year of his life. Phenomenal have been the advances made in the past forty years in the reduction of the infant mortality rate. In the birth registration area of 1915, there were approximately 100 infant mortalities during the first year for every 1,000 live births. By 1949 this figure had been reduced to less than 32, a decline of more than two-thirds.[45] Doubtless one factor in this amazing record is the fact that in 1948 a total of 85.6 per cent of all births were attended by a physician in a hospital, whereas thirteen years previously (1935), only 36.9 per cent represented hospital deliveries.[46] Despite tremendous improvement in the country as a whole, however, the highest rates are still found in the areas where economic conditions are poorest.

Of the infants who die during the first year of life, more than two-thirds succumb within the first month. This points dramatically to the importance of adequate care of expectant mothers during pregnancy and parturition, as well as better care for the newborn. The loss of mothers in childbirth in the United States is considerably higher than in many other advanced countries. For years this figure had been running at the rate of between 6.0 and 7.0 deaths per 1,000 births. "As recently as 1938," says the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, "the maternal mortality rate in the United States was 4.4 per 1,000 live births; by 1948 . . . the rate was only 1.2." [47]

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[43] *Ibid.*, p. 41.

[44] *Ibid.*, p. 43.

[45] Federal Security Agency, Public Health Service, National Office of Vital Statistics, *Vital Statistics of the United States, 1949* (Washington, 1951), Part II, p. 2.

[46] *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, p. 60.

By making a frontal attack on this problem, the medical world has demonstrated the tremendous possibilities inherent in modern scientific knowledge. A combination of factors has made this progress possible: better obstetrical standards, more frequent hospitalization, use of chemotherapy and the antibiotics in the control of puerperal infections, better nutrition, and state laws requiring premarital and prenatal examination for syphilis.

Credit for these achievements must also be ascribed to the Maternal and Child Health features of the Social Security Act of 1935 and subsequent amendments thereto. This program encourages state health departments to improve maternal and child health services, especially in rural areas and in those regions suffering from severe economic distress. Half of the federal funds available for this purpose ($16,500,000) are given to the states on a matching basis, and the other half on the basis of need. All of the states cooperate in this program, which includes prenatal clinics, home delivery service in rural areas, infant and child health conferences, and services for physical health, mental health, and dental health.[48]

Child Labor and the Democratic Ideal

The first four decades of this century saw a veritable revolution in public opinion and law relative to child labor. The notion that it is wholesome for children to work for excessively long hours in factories or fields has been discarded. Certain standards with respect to child labor have been accepted. Among these standards are: (a) no child under sixteen should be employed during school hours; (b) no child under sixteen should engage in manufacturing, mining, or other pursuits in which power-driven machinery is involved; (c) children under eighteen should not be permitted to work longer than eight hours a day and forty hours a week; and (d) children fourteen and fifteen years of age *should* be allowed to engage in agriculture, domestic service, street trades, light industry, and similar occupations in after-school hours and vacation periods.[49]

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[47] Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, "How Much Safer Can Maternity and Infancy Be?" *Statistical Bulletin*, December 1950.

[48] *Social Work Year Book, 1951*, "Maternal and Child Health," (New York: American Association of Social Workers), pp. 298-302.

The Federal Child Labor Amendment gives to Congress the power to limit, regulate, and prohibit the labor of persons under eighteen years of age. This Act was passed by Congress in 1924 but has failed of ratification by the several states. This failure has been partially compensated for by improvement of state laws and by specific federal legislation. An example of the latter is the 1938 Fair Labor Standards Act, which denies shipment in interstate or foreign commerce of goods produced in establishments that employ children under sixteen years of age.

The number of young workers 14 to 17 declined from nearly 2,500,000 in 1920 to approximately 1,000,000 in 1940. Wartime demands reversed this trend, and in April, 1944, nearly 3,000,000 members of this age group were at work. There was a consequent decline of more than 1,000,000 students enrolled in high schools between 1940 and 1944.[50] Teen-age workers contributed more than their share to the labor supply during World War II, and the number exceeded the peacetime total by 2,800,000. There was a general relaxation in enforcing existing legislation with respect to types of employment, hours and conditions of labor. Young workers who had left school worked an average of 46 hours per week, which was approximately the same as the older workers.[51]

At the conclusion of the war, the wartime trend with respect to child workers was continued. Hundreds of thousands of boys and girls stayed at their jobs and out of school. The extended period of postwar prosperity, with its inflationary accompaniments, was largely responsible for this continuation of teen-age employment. The decline in the proportion of young people five to seventeen attending school reflects this situation. In 1940, as noted, less than one million young people fourteen to seventeen years of age were employed. In 1949 this figure was almost two million.[52] Proportionately, the situation was even more aggravated than the one hundred per cent increase for 1949 would indicate. Fewer young people were in this age group than was the case in 1940, owing to the low birth rate of the thirties. In the fall of 1951, however, 85 per cent of the age group fourteen to seventeen were enrolled in school.[53] This figure suggests that the long-term trend toward the decline of child labor has been resumed.

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[49] United States Department of Labor, Children's Bureau, *Why Child Labor Laws?* Publication No. 313, (Washington, 1946).

[50] "Trends of Child Labor, 1940–44," *Monthly Labor Review*, April 1945, LX, 756-75.

[51] "Teen-Age Youth in the Wartime Labor Force," *ibid.*, January 1945, 6-17.

[52] "Unemployment Among the Teen-Aged in 1947–49," *ibid.*, December 1949, LXIX, 646-48.

Illegitimacy and the Democratic Ideal

One other aspect of twentieth century American attitudes toward the child remains to be considered. This has to do with children of unmarried parents. The number of children born out of wedlock in 1947 was estimated at 131,900, approximately 54 per cent of which were born to nonwhite parents and about 46 per cent to white parents. This figure for 1947 represented an increase of 50 per cent over the comparable figure for 1938, with most of the increase occurring during the war and postwar years.[54] The total estimated figure probably understates the actual situation, since the number of unregistered illegitimate births is known to be great. Almost one in four of these children was born to a mother seventeen years of age and younger, and two out of five mothers were in their teens. Furthermore, a lower proportion of the illegitimate births were delivered in hospitals or institutions.

The manner in which society treats the child born out of wedlock is an indication of the practical working of the democratic ideal. The rigid teachings of the Church with respect to sex conduct have meant that the unmarried mother has traditionally been treated with extreme cruelty, and the child has been denied privileges accorded to those born in a socially approved manner. Although the common law regarded the child as "the child of no one," this attitude was mitigated in practice by the desire of the community to avoid any acceptance of responsibility. Hence the mother was considered as having a moral right to claim the child and to make provision for his support, even though she may have had no such legal right.[55]

In law and in practice, the trend in the United States has been toward the improvement of the status of the child of the unmarried mother. The general legal principle now universally accepted by the states is that the child is the son of the mother, that he takes her domicile and name, that he is connected with her by ties of blood, and that he has the right to inherit from her. In general, there are three methods provided by which such a child may become legitimate: (a) by the marriage of the parents after the birth of the child; (b) by petition to a court for legitimation if the parents are not married; and (c) by acknowledgment of paternity.

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[53] Bureau of the Census, "School Enrollment—October 1951," *Current Population Reports, Population Characteristics*, Series P-20, No. 37, February 18, 1952.

[54] Federal Security Agency, Public Health Service, National Office of Vital Statistics, "Illegitimate Births, 1938–47," *Vital Statistics—Special Reports*, Vol. 33, No. 5, February 15, 1950.

[55] Clarke, *Social Legislation*, chapter 13.

Some states have enacted legislation which, in effect, makes the appropriate state agency responsible for acting as a kind of parent to children born out of wedlock. In recent years, Arizona and North Dakota have enacted laws placing the illegitimate child on an equal legal footing with the legitimate child. Following the earlier examples of California and Massachusetts, eleven additional states, by 1949, had statutes which eliminated the question of legitimacy from the birth certificate.[56] The objection to this procedure is that administrative, medical, and social agencies have sound reasons for requiring this information. Consequently, a recent policy advocates the use of a birth card which the individual may carry to establish date and place of birth, but which is not a complete record indicating the circumstances of birth. For administrative agencies who need such information, the custodian of the records can supply confidential verification from the complete report.[57]

The lot of the illegitimate child has been mitigated in still another way. There is a growing conviction that public assistance should be available to these children on the same basis as to legitimate children. In some states much progress has been made in this respect. In those states that have been willing to cooperate, federal contributions for aid to dependent children are now permitted for the maintenance of families that comprise only the unmarried mother and child. It is to be expected that some abuses will occur in connection with this liberalization of policy. At the same time, the principle is consistent with the democratic belief in equality of opportunity for the child, regardless of the unfortunate accident of his birth.

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[56] Federal Security Agency, *Vital Statistics of the United States, 1949,* Part I, p. 33.

[57] Federal Security Agency, *Illegitimate Births,* 1938–47, p. 81.

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PART II

COURTSHIP AND MARRIAGE

6

COURTSHIP AND SOCIETY

During a certain period in his life, the average person in our society falls in love and marries. This seems to be such a natural process that many of our readers will doubtless wonder why we do not leave it at that. Any further discussion seems superfluous to those persons who do not question the folkways and mores and who therefore assume that courtship is a "natural" response to certain glandular changes. These biological factors are unquestionably present in courtship behavior, but they do not tell the whole story. Courtship occurs between two persons who have been indoctrinated in the expectations of a particular society, as expressed in its culture. In the preceding section, we have examined some of the general expectations of American society, with particular reference to the family. We shall continue this analysis by indicating the role of culture and society in setting the stage for courtship and marriage.

The Nature of Courtship

Courtship is ordinarily the product of late adolescence and early adulthood, wherein the individual permanently transfers his affections to a member of the opposite sex. In this period, the search for a love object becomes progressively engrossing, until it temporarily overshadows all other considerations for the average young man or woman in our society. Sooner or later, most persons find the man or woman who appears (at the time, at least) to answer their specifications for an ideal mate. In the United States, this search is conducted by the individual largely on his own initiative, even though he is unconsciously motivated by the cultural expectations of our society. This combination of social conditioning and maturing physiological drives makes courtship highly complicated. It also makes it infinitely exciting to the immediate participants.

Courtship comprises that period in the life of the average individual between his more or less casual social relationships with the opposite sex and the definite and presumably permanent commitment of marriage. Courtship is therefore the intermediate stage between dating and marriage and as such is clearly a period of transition. The precourtship stage of association involves the delightful game known as "dating," whereby various social relationships are pursued for their own sake and (ordinarily) without any ulterior motive on either side. We shall consider dating in a subsequent chapter, as a characteristic and virtually unique form of heterosexual behavior peculiar to American society. Courtship proper, however, is the growing emotional involvement to the point where plans for marriage become prominent. In short, courtship includes "all forms of behavior by which a man seeks to win the consent of a woman for marriage." [1]

Courtship is therefore a transitional interlude between the family of orientation and the family of procreation. The individual is seeking his final emancipation from his parental family by founding a family of his own. In another sense, courtship is a process of role-changing, wherein the adolescent boy and girl prepare to assume the role of husband and wife and, eventually, of parents. This change of role is often an abrupt and traumatic experience for the young person who has recently been a footloose adolescent, with a minimum of responsibility in his former status.

This change of status and role is facilitated in our society by the intense personal attraction arising out of romantic love, whereby the participants develop a strong compulsion to change one role for another, more responsible one. In later life, the husband and wife may look back with nostalgia to their erstwhile freedom before marriage. But at the time when friendship is first ripening into love, they ask nothing more than to spend the rest of their lives with the object of their affection.

The change from unattached adolescent to thoroughly involved parent comprises four successive stages. They are: (a) dating, (b) courtship, (c) marriage, and (d) family relationships. We may anticipate our discussion by briefly indicating the nature of these role changes. Dating involves social activities that are enjoyed partly for their own sake and partly for the sake of the prestige and emotional security deriving therefrom. Courtship also involves pleasurable activities, but these activities are now means to an end (marriage), rather than ends in themselves, as in dating. In marriage, the emphasis is upon the relationships between husband and wife, as they play the cultural roles expected of them and also add their unique interpretations of these roles. In the majority of cases, marriage ultimately becomes the family, as the child is added to complete the relationship of husband and wife. The relationships of marriage and the family, as of life itself, never stand still.

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[1] Ernest W. Burgess and Harvey J. Locke, *The Family* (New York: American Book Company, 1945), p. 361.

Each of the above stages is carried on in the cultural context of American society. As we have seen, this culture is marked by an emphasis upon individualism, as contrasted to the familism of other cultures. Dating, courtship, marriage, and the family naturally reflect this pervasive individualism, whereby the desires of the individual take precedence over those of any larger social unit in the activities leading to and embracing marriage. We shall be concerned henceforth with many of the manifestations of this individualistic spirit, as manifested in behavior as seemingly diverse as dating and divorce. We may here indicate briefly the relationship between individualism and courtship, with particular emphasis upon the function of courtship in an individualistic society.

The principal goal of marriage in our society is the happiness of the individuals directly concerned. This hedonistic goal is at striking variance with the situation in other societies, where such factors as continuance of the family name, acquisition of additional property, increase in family status, or similar tangible and mundane considerations constitute the chief reasons for marriage. Under some such definition, the great majority of the earth's peoples live, and under these conditions the arrangement of marriage by the parents or other responsible adults is an eminently reasonable procedure. Marriage is so important to the family that it should not be intrusted solely to the youthful members who are merely the principals in the contract. In their ardor and inexperience, they might make mistakes which would reflect adversely on the families that reared them and prepared them for this important status.[2]

Happiness in marriage, however, is by definition the concern of the two persons most directly affected. When this is the goal of marriage, it is natural that each should be vitally interested in the person with whom he will soon engage in a cooperative quest for happiness and, (more or less incidentally) in the process, start a family of his own. In our society, therefore, the question of individual choice in marriage is paramount, and all other matters are subordinated to it. Courtship takes on added importance, since it is the process by which this choice is made and the participants rendered happy or unhappy for the rest of their lives.

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[2] Robert F. Winch, *The Modern Family* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1952), p. 442.

If courtship turns out well, the goal of individual happiness is presumably within reach of the happy couple. If it does not, many consider it their inalienable right to try again with another partner. There are those who question the morality of this general attitude toward marriage, but no unbiased observer can deny its widespread existence in American society. In these terms, courtship becomes of basic importance in the life and happiness of the individual. He is, in effect, weighing the desirability of various potential spouses for the subsequent search for happiness which they will jointly conduct. This is the major function of courtship in American society.[3]

The Social Setting of Courtship

We have discussed the social and cultural setting of the family in the United States. We shall next turn our attention to the process of courtship, which also reflects the culture and society in which it occurs. We may distinguish between these two concepts in terms of their effect upon the family. American society refers to the large number of persons in reciprocal relationships who together constitute the national entity of the United States. American culture refers to the heritage of this society, to the material and nonmaterial products of the relationships between its members. American culture implies many persons living together in the complex web of social relationships known as American society. Culture and society are thus reciprocal and interdependent, and one cannot exist without the other. Nevertheless, these concepts are not synonymous and refer to different aspects of the same complex whole.[4]

The social setting of courtship has undergone widespread changes in the past century. This means that courtship itself has changed, at least in many important respects. This change is especially apparent in the *behavior* of courtship, as distinguished from the *social values* that define it. The result of this differential rate of change between behavior and its definition is a social problem, in which large numbers of persons are engaging in activities not sanctioned by the mores.[5] The latter are, for the most part, the product of a simple, rural, primary-group society, such as that which existed in large measure a century ago.

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[3] *Ibid.*, p. 443.

[4] Cf. Francis E. Merrill and H. Wentworth Eldredge, *Culture and Society* (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1952), chaps. 2-3.

The mores of courtship—as well as those of marriage and the family—grew slowly out of this primary society and became the expected forms of behavior. Behavior, however, did not stand still but continued to change at an increasing rate of speed. More and more persons, in courtship, marriage, and the family, are acting in response to the changing social situation and hence are engaging in behavior not sanctioned by the mores. We may survey briefly some of the social changes that have precipitated this cultural lag.[6]

1. *Urbanization and Courtship.* In 1870, some 74.3 per cent of the population of the United States was listed as rural, that is, living in communities of less than 2,500 persons or in the open country. By the same definition, only 25.7 per cent was listed as urban. In 1950, this urban ratio had changed to 63.0 per cent of the population, with 21.1 per cent as rural-nonfarm, and 15.8 per cent as rural-farm.[7] The social setting in which the majority of the people live thus underwent a tremendous change in less than a century. The various relationships between the sexes, from dating to the family, underwent a corresponding change. The practices of courtship were also basically affected.

In the rural community, courtship was largely conditioned by the folkways and mores. Young people were known by name, or at least by sight, to many other members of the community, old and young. The expectations of the group concerning courtship were clearly defined, and the young man knew what was expected of him after he had called on a young lady more than half a dozen times.

In the modern metropolitan community, the average young person is completely anonymous outside of his own immediate neighborhood. There are few neighborhood groups, admiring or censorious, to comment on courtship behavior and keep the young people in line. The social contacts in late adolescence and early adulthood are more casual, in the sense that traditional obligations do not rest so heavily upon behavior. In the years before marriage, the young person may go out with many different members of the opposite sex, either simultaneously or consecutively, and no one thinks anything of it. In short, increasing urbanization has changed the primary setting to one in which secondary relationships assume an increasing importance.[8]

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[5] Francis E. Merrill, "The Study of Social Problems," *American Sociological Review*, June 1948, XIII, 251-59.

[6] William F. Ogburn, *Social Change*, rev. ed. (New York: The Viking Press, 1950).

[7] Bureau of the Census, "Marital Status and Household Characteristics: March, 1950," *Current Population Reports: Population Characteristics*, Series P-20, No. 33, February 12, 1951.

2. *Secularization and Courtship.* The trend toward urbanization has been accompanied by an increasing secularization of many social relationships, including courtship. We have considered this trend above, in terms of the individualism that characterizes the contemporary family. A secular society is one in which change and innovation are fostered, whereas a sacred society is one in which resistance to change is encouraged by the mores.[9] In general, the rural community was the prevailing way of life throughout American society a century ago and still prevails (albeit in weakened form) in many isolated communities. This isolation is fast breaking down before the communication devices that are disseminating the mass culture. The mass circulation magazine, the radio, the motion picture, and television are all bringing new and standardized ways of doing things—including new patterns of dating and courtship behavior—into every community in the country. The secular and convenient are fast replacing the sacred and traditional.

This trend from the sacred to the secular in courtship behavior has been summarized by Burgess and Locke in terms of four stages.

(a) *The Colonial Stage.* The earliest form of behavior in the American colonies, because of its emphasis upon arranged marriage, could hardly qualify as courtship in the modern sense. Marriages were usually arranged by the parents, and the preliminaries were few and perfunctory.

(b) *The Rural Stage.* As the population moved from the eastern seaboard to the farms and rural communities of the interior, courtship began to change from arrangement to individual choice. The latter was largely determined by the mores, however, and the period of courtship was often limited, as the young people became engaged after comparatively short acquaintance.

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[8] Cf. Louis Wirth, "Urbanism as a Way of Life," *American Journal of Sociology*, July 1938, XLIV, 1-24.

[9] Cf. Howard Becker, "Sacred and Secular Societies," *Social Forces*, May 1950, XXVIII, 361-76.

(c) *The Town Stage.* The increasing urbanization of the country, prior to World War I, produced a third historical stage in the process from sacred to secular courtship. The "town" stage was marked by a progressive relaxation of many of the earlier conventional standards, and courtship became marked by greater freedom, both before and after the engagement.

(d) *The Metropolitan Stage.* In the contemporary metropolitan area, the social expectations governing courtship are even more casual than in earlier stages and determined by convenience, rather than exclusively by the mores. This stage also coincides with the relaxation of the standards of sexual behavior, which was generally believed to have occurred in the period between the two world wars.[10]

3. *Individualism and Courtship.* A third aspect of the changing social setting of courtship is the increasing individualism of the urban scene. Courtship in American society is, consciously or unconsciously, directed at the goal of individual happiness, rather than toward the advancement of the family, the procreation of children, or the acquisition of property. Hence, it is natural that the expectations governing courtship should reflect the growing emphasis on goals that are individually rather than group oriented.

The person who seeks a wife is thus seeking an *individual* to whom he can devote the rest of his life, who will provide romantic love, conjugal affection, and emotional security in a world that is increasingly casual and unsympathetic. This statement seems so natural to the person reared in American society that he does not realize that these are unusual goals for courtship. Most of the peoples of the world desire in a prospective wife traits entirely different from personal attractiveness, vivacity, and romantic glamour.

This individualism is especially marked in the case of women. They have undergone changes in status and role in recent decades that have added greatly to their independence and powers of choice at all stages of the family relationship, from dating to courtship and marriage. Equality in education and employment has enhanced their position and has given them powers of choice that approach those of the male.

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[10] Burgess and Locke, *The Family*, pp. 362-65.

The majority of single women, for example, at one time or another participate actively in the labor force and thus acquire a feeling of economic independence. At any one time, approximately fifty per cent of all single women over fourteen years of age are gainfully employed, and slightly more than twenty-five per cent of the married women are also in the labor force. In both the single and married statuses, the women of this country have a degree of economic independence that has never before been seen on such a scale.[11]

4. *Mobility and Courtship.* A final element in the changing social setting for courtship is the increase in mobility. In this context, the concept refers primarily to *horizontal* mobility, whereby persons move from place to place, rather than to *vertical* mobility, whereby they move upward or downward in the social scale. The people of the United States have always been highly mobile, with a large number always on the move westward toward the next frontier. In chapter 4, we considered the impact upon the family of the restless ones. These pioneers were, however, a minority of the population, and the majority remained settled in rural communities or small towns for their own lifetime and often for generations. Under these comparatively settled conditions, the folkways of courtship had a chance to develop, and the individual was constrained by these expectations when it came to choosing a wife.

The immense social convulsions accompanying the depression of the 1930's, the mobilization for World War II, and the subsequent demobilization have contributed to the mobility of a population that was already growing steadily greater for decades. In a representative recent year, some 27½ million persons moved their places of residence at least once. Of this number, 19¼ million moved from one house to another within the same county, and 8¼ million moved from one county to another. At any one time, approximately 20 per cent of the population was in this mobile category, that is, had moved from one residence to another within the year.[12]

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[11] In April, 1951, some 49.6 per cent of all single women and 26.7 of all married women were in the labor force. Bureau of the Census, "Marital Status of Women in the Labor Force, April, 1951," *Current Population Reports: Labor Force*, Series P-50, No. 37, December 26, 1951.

[12] Bureau of the Census, "Internal Migration and Mobility in the United States: March 1949 to March 1950," *Current Population Reports: Population Characteristics*, Series P-20, No. 36, December 9, 1951.

The mores of courtship were the products of generations of settled living, wherein each generation knew approximately what was expected of it in the way of behavior both before and after marriage. Social control was vested primarily in the neighborhood and community group, and the average young person had no choice but to follow the conventional patterns of courtship and marriage. The informal pressures of public opinion, as exerted by the primary group, insured a high degree of conformity. When the majority of persons live under conditions of increasing mobility, with one out of every five a newcomer to the community (or at least to the neighborhood) within the year, courtship becomes more casual. Many persons are not familiar with the conventional expectations and would not follow them if they were. Within limits, the mobile individual tends to make the rules as he goes along.

The Cultural Patterns of Courtship

Culture and society are closely related but are not synonymous. Society is the people, and culture is the pattern of behavior that binds them together. We have indicated some of the changes that have occurred in the society in which modern courtship occurs. It is reasonable to assume that the related cultural patterns have changed correspondingly. The dynamic society of the twentieth century has perforce adapted its behavior to changes in the way of life. The cultural patterns of courtship that have been handed down from a primary society are no longer adequate. In the course of responding to new situations, the patterns themselves undergo modifications. In this way, changes in culture follow changes in society.

There is some delay in the relative speed with which this process takes place. Culture becomes patterned and is handed on to the next generation in conventionalized form. The old way becomes the right way, and value judgments arise about it. Each generation holds on to the traditional culture patterns of courtship as expected forms of behavior, even after these patterns have ceased to fit the new courtship situation. Furthermore, many of the traditional controls and expectations of the society concerning courtship have not changed as rapidly or completely in some sections as they have in others. There is, for example, a differential rate of change in courtship behavior between metropolitan areas and areas that are, or recently have been, predominantly rural. The old patterns linger on where the social changes have not been so drastic.[13]

In the primary community, the mores governing courtship were comparatively fixed. Young people ordinarily met under appropriate circumstances, with a formal introduction. The aggressive role was assumed by the male, who asked permission to call on the girl. This involved an initial visit in the parlor, with other members of the family either present or sitting in the next room. By the time the boy had called on the girl several times, the parents would inquire about his intentions. If he indicated that they were serious, eventual marriage was unofficially recognized, and parental chaperonage was somewhat relaxed. All but the chastest manifestations of affection were presumably postponed until the actual commitment to marriage, which was marked by the engagement ring, followed by a formal announcement. When this stage was reached, a hands-off policy was adopted by possible rival suitors, and the couple themselves accepted the fact that their attentions henceforth belonged exclusively to each other. Marriage was the logical and (ordinarily) the inevitable culmination of this process.

This code still persists, but only in the books of etiquette. We shall consider the actual process of courtship in more detail in subsequent chapters. We are concerned here merely with indicating that the pattern was once comparatively fixed. Today, no such certainty exists. The same gesture may be interpreted in many different ways by persons coming from different subcultures. One girl will laugh at a word or proposal that will cause other girls embarrassment or offense. The interpretation of the stimulus differs when the established patterns have broken down. In modern courtship, neither the boy nor the girl often knows what to expect. The former certainties, enforced by the folkways and mores, have given way to the experimentation of a changing culture.[14]

Chance meetings and informal occasions have largely replaced the prearranged social gatherings at which so many courtships were formerly initiated. The former taboos against meeting under unconventional circumstances are no longer effective. The nonexistent "parlor" in an urban apartment has been replaced by the automobile, a change that automatically rules out the chaperone. The kiss has lost its former symbolic significance and has become an end in itself. The engagement may or may not be formally announced, and the ring often merely serves notice that the girl is somewhat less of a free agent than formerly. In general, neither party completely cuts himself or herself from social engagements with the opposite sex.

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[13] Marvin R. Koller, "Some Changes in Courtship Behavior in Three Generations of Ohio Women," *American Sociological Review*, June 1951, XVI, 366-70.

[14] Margaret Mead, *Male and Female* (New York: William Morrow & Company, 1949), p. 252.

The culture patterns of courtship are thus in a state of confusion. These patterns are adjustments to life situations and have been handed down for generations. There is nothing necessarily sacred in many of them. In the stable and primary environment that characterized western European and American society until a century ago, these patterns evolved naturally from the way of life. Many of them are inadequate today, in the face of the changed situation.

The difficulty of adjustment should not be attributed to any inherent mood of rebellion in young people, who refuse to follow the established conventions. The underlying cause should rather be sought in the social changes that are necessitating new types of adjustment, which, in turn, will be the folkways and mores of tomorrow. Instead of a rebellion of modern youth, dating and courtship reflect a groping, confusion, and insecurity arising out of the inability to evolve adequate patterns to meet the changing situation.[15]

The patterns of courtship are marked by a number of inconsistencies, a situation that is an inevitable result of the social and cultural changes outlined above. There is, for example, a marked inconsistency between the pattern of mate selection and the pattern of romance, and the criteria for these two aspects of courtship are very different. The traits that attract the romantic lover are not necessarily those that make the best husband or wife. Likewise, there is a related inconsistency between the patterns of dating and those of happy marriage. Many of the standards that the individual seeks in a date are not the same as those that make for a desirable spouse. Again, there are general inconsistencies between the old and the new patterns of courtship itself, wherein the formal pattern is simply not in accord with the conditions of the present day. Contemporary courtship is still developing, and its elements are still "incomplete, unaccepted by society, or in a state of transition." [16]

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[15] Cf. Willard Waller, *The Family*, rev. Reuben Hill (New York: The Dryden Press, 1951), chap. 6, "The Cultural Background of Courtship."

In common with many of the other elements of American culture, courtship is directed toward the future, rather than toward the past. In a static society, the individual attempts to follow the behavior of his parents and their parents before them.[17] Under such conditions, courtship takes place in accordance with established rituals that have the sanction of long usage. In our own society, the individual is expected to leave behind the patterns of the past and look toward the future. This element of improvisation has been an important characteristic of American society since its origins; the situation has been a new one and has continually called for new forms of behavior. This factor of novelty has been intensified by the increasing urbanization, secularization, mobility, and individualism of our society. Under such conditions, boys and girls—whether they realize it or not—are always breaking new ground in courtship.

A final factor in the determination of contemporary courtship is mass communication.[18] The agencies of mass communication include the motion picture, the radio, the mass circulation magazines, and television. They disseminate the mass culture, which is the comparatively uniform pattern understood by persons in all sections of the country, irrespective of regional differences. Adolescents learn many of the folkways of courtship directly from the motion pictures or the radio, instead of by word of mouth from their parents or other primary groups. The new means of acculturation are not necessarily either "better" or "worse" than the old. The primary consideration is that they represent different approaches to courtship. The old patterns are thus mingled with the new, and the young person is honestly bewildered as to what course to follow.[19]

The Basic Function of Courtship

We have considered the nature of courtship, the social setting in which it occurs, and the changing cultural patterns which evolve from this setting. We may next consider the functions of courtship, that is, the activities it performs and the contributions it makes to marriage and the family. The central function of courtship in any society is to determine who marries whom. Courtship thus sets the stage for both marital and familial institutions. There is a close functional relationship between courtship and the goals of marriage and family life. This relationship is readily apparent in closely-knit and static societies, where the elements of culture are consistent and where one part of the pattern makes sense in terms both of the other parts and the pattern as a whole.

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[16] Donald L. Taylor, "Courtship as a Social Institution in the United States, 1930 to 1945," *Social Forces*, October 1946, XXV, 69.

[17] Mead, *Male and Female*, p. 253.

[18] Cf. Wilbur Schramm, ed., *Mass Communications* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1949).

[19] For a stimulating discussion of these and other aspects of the mass culture, see David Riesman, *The Lonely Crowd* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950).

From the foregoing discussion, it should be clear that no such internal consistency exists in the courtship pattern of the United States. Some of the folkways and mores that have come down from an earlier day have very little relevance to contemporary metropolitan conditions. Other and emerging elements have not yet been accepted into the culture, even though their utility appears evident to the enlightened observer.

Despite the inconsistencies and malfunctionings of the courtship pattern, people still continue to meet, marry, and have children. This fact suggests that courtship still operates, albeit often in chaotic and blundering fashion, to carry out its most important function; namely, that of determining, under the terms of the prevailing cultural norms, what individuals will marry and whom they will marry. The central goal of marriage in our society, as we have noted, is the happiness of the individual participants, rather than such elements as prestige, money, or procreation.

The machinery of courtship is largely a reflection of this central goal and hence courtship assumes an over-all functionalism. The process culminates in the *mutual* and *reciprocal* choice of two young persons, with relatively little cooperation or hindrance from family, church, or state, for the presumably permanent relationship of marriage. Up to this point, therefore, the culture pattern of courtship is highly functional. Americans are the most married people in the Western world.[20]

But the story does not end here, as it does in the movies, with the couple living happily ever after. The question inevitably arises, in considering the functionalism of contemporary courtship, as to whether it leads to the *best possible* selection of mates, even for the particular purposes held out for marriage. Does the average young man or woman, in other words, have the opportunity to choose a mate who will satisfy the complex (and often contradictory) requirements for a husband or wife in our society?

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[20] Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, "Recent International Marriage Trends," *Statistical Bulletin,* June 1951.

The divorce statistics would suggest a negative, or at least a qualified, answer to this question. Divorce reflects the failure of the marriage to live up to the expectations of the participants. This situation in turn suggests either: (a) that the romantic goals are impossible of realization; or (b) that the courtship process does not adequately prepare people to realize these goals. The explanation for the failure of large numbers of marriages involves both of these factors. We shall consider the romantic element in the following chapter. We merely suggest here that, in general, the prevailing mode of courtship leaves something to be desired in the choice of mates.[21]

Courtship is an irrational process. There may not be any inherent virtue in the exercise of pure reason in human affairs, especially those involving the choice of a marriage partner. We are merely suggesting that courtship in our society is conducted in an aura of conspicuous irrationality, even though the resulting state of matrimony is an eminently serious and (at least partially) rational business. This disregard of rational considerations is, in turn, in accord with the central goal of individual happiness in marriage, which does not lend itself to the employment of the rational faculties. In societies where men marry for other and more prosaic reasons, the arrangement of the marriage is ordinarily conducted by the families, who are presumably acting under rational premises and are not carried away by passion or infatuation. In our own society, we scorn such sordid considerations. We prefer to carry on courtship and marital choice in an atmosphere of glorious irrationality.

Even if we *did* wish to conduct our courtship in a rational manner, the choice would be confused by unconscious emotions. Men and women who seek each other out in marriage are moved by motivations, the nature and even existence of which they are largely unaware. On the rational level, a group of undergraduate women may list the qualifications for a husband in some such order as the following: "ambition, intelligence, education, relative age, disposition, health, courage, relative height, sex appeal, family attitude toward, forcefulness, popularity with other girls, wealth, appearance, religious affiliation, physical strength, nationality background, occupation, social position, . . . and place of birth." [22]

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[21] Winch, *The Modern Family*, pp. 442-45.

The *actual* motives for the choice of any particular man may be very different from these expressions. We shall consider these subconscious motivations in more detail in a subsequent chapter. We wish merely to indicate in this context the general implications of courtship and marital choice. As conducted in our society, courtship is a process involving the entire personality, conscious and unconscious, rational and nonrational.

The Secondary Functions of Courtship

The *basic* function of courtship in our society is, then, the enhancement of individual happiness through the choice of an attractive and romantic mate, with whom one may embark upon a lifetime of marital felicity. In addition to this basic function, other secondary functions have been suggested.[23]

1. *Marital Selection.* In an obvious sense, courtship establishes who shall marry and to whom. The genetic equipment of one generation is transmitted to the next through courtship and marriage. The criteria for this process differ among societies. In some societies, the wealthiest girls, those with the highest social status, or those with the sturdiest physiques are the ones who inevitably get married. These factors do not necessarily insure marriage in our society, where even position and wealth may be insufficient to induce a man to marry a particular girl. With us, the wife is more often chosen on the basis of such irrelevant factors (in the sense of making a good wife and mother, at least) as a pretty face and a slim ankle.

2. *Reciprocal Accommodation.* Prolonged relationships between two people involve a never-ending series of accommodations. The only alternative is the perpetual yielding of one person, a relationship that is becoming increasingly unlikely in a democratic and equalitarian society. Each member must make concessions to the other, even if they are in such petty matters as whether or not to go to the

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[22] Thomas C. McCormick and Boyd E. Macrory, "Group Values in Mate Selection in a Sample of College Girls," *Social Forces*, March 1944, XXII, 315-17, Table 2.

[23] Niles Carpenter, "Courtship Practices and Contemporary Social Change in America," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, March 1932, CLX, 38-44.

movies and, if so, where. This accommodation is an important element in a satisfactory marital relationship, as we shall see in chapter 11, where we discuss the nature of conjugal affection. The courtship period is merely the beginning of such concessions, when the glamour of the original dating is partially worn off and each finds that he cannot be perpetually on his best behavior. Courtships marked by such accommodative relationships represent an important initial step toward a successful marriage.

3. *Emotional Development.* A third function of courtship is to provide a social situation in which the individual develops emotionally and begins to assume adult status. The frivolities of dating are now presumably at an end and both partners realize that they are standing on the threshold of a new stage in their lives. Our society is at best strongly marked by "discontinuities" in status, whereby the individual undergoes abrupt transitions from one status to another, often without preliminary conditioning.[24] The period of adolescence is prolonged, during which the adolescent is expected to be free from responsibility, submissive to his parents, and comparatively sexless. Once entered upon the marriage status, however, he is supposed suddenly to become responsible, dominant, and sexually active. Courtship is a serious search and ultimate finding of a mate and this period helps to provide an element of responsibility between adolescence and adulthood.

Courtship in American society is an individual quest for a mate who will make both parties happy in marriage. Courtship in any society is conducted in a particular cultural milieu and in accordance with its distinctive patterns. A certain consistency exists, therefore, between courtship and the cultural pattern as a whole. Courtship performs a central social function, which is more or less consistent with the other elements in the culture pattern. Courtship should be judged in terms of the prevailing aspirations of the society in which it currently operates, not in terms of other societies.

In the United States, courtship is a trial-and-error search for happiness. It is not primarily oriented toward the rational arrangement of marriage on the basis of factors that make for stability. Marriage in our society is a social relationship that stresses personal happiness. As such, it is an admittedly frail reed upon which to base a social institution such as the family. Given the basic cultural norms, however, courtship tends to lead toward a marriage of this kind and should not be unduly criticized because it does not produce completely stable marriages.

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[24] Ruth Benedict, "Continuities and Discontinuities in Cultural Conditioning," *Psychiatry*, May 1938, I, 161-67.

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MEAD, MARGARET, *Male and Female*. New York: William Morrow & Company, 1949. A stimulating work by a noted anthropologist. Contains many brilliant insights into the changing patterns of courtship in American culture.

MERRILL, FRANCIS E., *Courtship and Marriage*. New York: The Dryden Press, 1949. Part I deals with the general subject of courtship as a social relationship.

SKIDMORE, REX A. and ANTHON S. CANNON, *Building Your Marriage*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1951. Many chapters deal with the general subject of courtship. Chapter 5, "Courtship and the Growth of Love," is especially directed thereto.

TAYLOR, DONALD L., "Courtship as a Social Institution in the United States, 1930 to 1945," *Social Forces*, October 1946, XXV, 65-69. A social institution comprises a related pattern of social expectations directed toward some general goal. In this sense, courtship is a social institution and is so treated in this article.

Waller, Willard, *The Family*, rev. Reuben Hill. New York: The Dryden Press, 1951. The brilliant analysis of courtship originally developed by Willard Waller has been carried forward with equal brilliance by Reuben Hill in a revision. Part Three, "Mate Finding: Establishing Relationships," deals especially with courtship.

7

COURTSHIP AND ROMANTIC LOVE

"AMERICA," remarked a sympathetic foreign observer, "appears to be the only country in the world where love is a national problem." [1] In no other country, he continues, do people devote so much of their time and energy to an anxious consideration of love and to the fear that their marital relationships will not result in personal happiness. Americans are not the first people in history faced with the necessity of getting along with each other in marriage. But Americans are unique in the excessive attention which they give to the hedonistic satisfactions deriving from courtship and marriage. "The great majority of Americans of both sexes," continues our foreign observer, "seem to be in a state of chronic bewilderment in the face of a problem . . . which—unlike other people—they still refuse to accept as one of those gifts of the gods which one might just as well take as it is: a mixed blessing at times, and at other times a curse or merely a nuisance." [2]

The Nature of Romantic Love

Romantic love is thus an integral part of the culture of a democratic America. Romance plays an important role in determining the attitudes that young men and women hold toward marriage, attitudes that go far toward determining the success or failure of their family relationships. Romance is also an inescapable element in courtship, and the search for a mate is conducted in an atmosphere heavily impregnated with romantic expectations. The search for happiness, which is the principal motive for courtship and marriage, is itself defined in terms of criteria that are essentially romantic. Courtship that is *not* based upon romance is considered undesirable and even faintly immoral, as if the prospective spouses were motivated by sordid considerations. In view of these factors, any analysis of courtship in American society would be incomplete without an extended discussion of the nature and functions of romantic love.

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[1] Raoul de Roussy de Sales, "Love in America," *The Atlantic Monthly*, May 1938, CLXI, 645-51.

[2] *Ibid.*

Romantic love has been defined as "that complex of attitudes and sentiments which regards the marriage relation as one exclusively of response. This romantic attitude pictures the marriage relationship in terms of love—sexual attraction in large part—and sets up a standard according to which marriage is measured by the satisfaction of a highly idealized desire for response." [3] This belief in the supreme importance of romance as a necessary prelude to marriage is rooted deep in the expectation of our society. In Middletown, for example, "Marriage, under the romantic tradition prevailing in our American culture, nominally depends primarily upon the subtleties of personal response described as 'falling in love.' " [4] Rich and poor, young and old, boys and girls from all walks of life are exposed to this cluster of beliefs from the time they are able to walk. They enter the delightful period of courtship and the long and serious business of marriage with their eyes covered by the rose-colored glasses of romance.

The group of expectations making up romantic love has been further characterized in terms of the following beliefs: "(1) that in marriage will be found the only true happiness, (2) that affinities are ideal love relations, (3) that each may find an ideal mate, (4) that there is only one, and (5) this one will be immediately recognized when met. . . ." [5]

Romantic love may be further defined in stark functional terms. Romantic love is what it does. It is recognized as the "only valid basis for marriage." In Middletown, and everywhere else in the United States, young people discover their partners in marriage by the informal process of "falling in love." "Middletown adults," remark the Lynds, "appear to regard romance in marriage as something which, like their religion, must be believed in to hold society together. Girls are assured by their elders that 'love' is an unanalyzable mystery that 'just happens.' 'You'll know when the right one comes along,' they are told with a knowing smile."[6] This acceptance of the inevitability and necessity of falling in love before marriage is the essence of romantic love. The very fact that it is not questioned places romance in the category of the mores. Men and women do not question the eternal verities of their social order.

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[3] Ernest R. Mowrer, *Family Disorganization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1927), p. 160.

[4] Robert S. Lynd and Helen M. Lynd, *Middletown in Transition* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1937), p. 147.

[5] Mowrer, *op. cit.*, pp. 160-61.

Marriage and romantic love are considered as inextricably intermingled. The success or failure of a marriage is measured by the presence and continuance of this form of attachment. The fallacy that clings to this conception rests in the belief that the romantic relationship of lover and sweetheart can continue unchanged after marriage. As a noted psychiatrist remarks, "Romance lasting for many years is only imaginable in Utopia. . . . No person can remain in the grip of a strange fascination for a long time. . . . Romance is a nine-day wonder."[7] The difficulty often arises from the failure to understand and allow for the inevitability of this change and the accompanying belief that the cooling of romance signals the failure of marriage.

Romantic love appears to be more characteristic of the subculture of the middle- and upper-class groups in the United States than that of the lower-class groups. This differential emphasis is indirectly indicated by the researches of Kinsey, who demonstrates that there is a wide difference between the "social levels" in terms of the incidence, frequency, and forms of sexual release. In general, the lower-level groups engage in more direct release in the form of sexual intercourse, whereas the middle- and upper-level groups tend to stress such indirect and vicarious sexual releases as petting, masturbation, and fantasy. The middle-class emphasis upon premarital virginity enhances the emotional idealization characteristic of the romantic complex. Lower-level males, on the other hand, are more interested in sexual release as an end in itself, rather than as a means to some more rarified end. Romantic love, furthermore, stresses the individual and operates on the premise that only one person can fulfill all the manifold characteristics of the ideal sweetheart. The lower-level male is primarily interested in sexual release as such and is not particularly concerned with the personal traits of his sexual partner.[8]

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[6] Lynd and Lynd, *Middletown*, p. 115.

[7] Theodor Reik, *A Psychologist Looks at Love* (New York: Rinehart & Company, Inc., 1944), p. 295.

[8] Alfred C. Kinsey *et al.*, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Company, 1948), chap. 10.

Sex and Romance

To those persons innocent of the most rudimentary knowledge of the cultural disciplines, the only possible explanation of human behavior is biological in character. According to this point of view, people act as they do because they are born that way. Nature therefore serves as the great explanation as well as the great mother of all human conduct. Men and women are thus thought to be romantic because there is a mysterious something in their genic equipment that predisposes them in this direction. Romantic love is considered to be the normal reaction of two young people of the opposite sex to the physical urges with which they are endowed by the Creator for the preservation of the species and the improvement of the race.

The belief that the romantic pattern is natural and instinctive and therefore in complete accordance with the otherwise inscrutable designs of Providence is infinitely reassuring to millions of men and women as they grope for some element of security in a complex society. The majority of persons in our society therefore regard with expressions ranging from mild surprise to annoyed incredulity anyone who dares suggest that sex and romantic love are not brothers and sisters under the skin.

This relationship is denied by most modern psychologists. "Sex," suggests Theodor Reik, "is an instinct, a biological need, originating in the organism, bound to the body. . . . Its aim is the disappearance of a physical tension." [9] Romantic love, on the other hand, is not in the same biological category at all, since the majority of people in the world never experience it even in the most attenuated form. Many cultures have never known romance, a situation that would be clearly impossible if there were any specific genic elements that inevitably produced the characteristic manifestations of romance. Sex therefore "appears as a phenomenon of nature, common to men and beasts. Love is the result of a cultural development and is not even found among all men." [10] This does not mean that there is no relationship whatever between sex and romance. In many instances, they are both directed toward the same object. In our culture, such an identity is part of the romantic ideology. But this association does not mean that the two emotions are one and the same.

[9] Reik, *A Psychologist Looks at Love*, p. 18.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. 19.

Romantic love plays an important part in the process which Havelock Ellis has termed "the cycle of tumescence and detumescence." [11] The former concept refers to the building up of sexual tensions and the latter refers to their release. Courtship is the stage of the cycle connected with tumescence, whereby the sexual tensions are increased by a variety of secondary stimuli. Marriage represents the stage of detumescence, where the sexual tensions are relieved under socially approved circumstances. In our society, complete sexual union is supposed to wait until marriage, but at the same time romantic love attracts the partners and sanctions various secondary sexual relationships between them. The role of romantic love in the sexual cycle is an ambivalent one, with an initial attraction followed by culturally-defined repressions, which in turn are ultimately released in marriage.[12]

Romantic love thus appears to be the product of sexual repression, at least in terms of the complete expression of this impulse. In societies that permit extensive sexual freedom before marriage, romantic love seems to be absent. When young people in primitive societies are permitted a strong measure of sexual experimentation before marriage, the emotional intensity of their relationships is correspondingly low. Under such conditions, tumescence does not arise over a long period of intimacy, as it does in our society under the stimulus of petting and other secondary manifestations. In such sexually permissive societies as those of Samoa and the Trobriand Islands, love-making is a game, not a devouring passion as in our society.[13]

Romantic Love and the Sexual Object

Sex in its elementary form is not particularly fastidious as to choice of object. Sexual tensions may be released by a wide variety of stimuli and by persons with whom the individual may have no romantic relationship whatever. Romance, on the other hand, is extremely particular. One and only one sweetheart is the desired object of affection. "The object of love," affirms Reik, "is always seen as a person and a personality. . . . It has to have certain psychical qualities which are highly valued, the existence of which is not demanded from a mere sexual object." [14] In the development of the romantic attitude, emphasis is placed upon individual characteristics and individual choice. Sex may be relatively impersonal and the individual is often undiscriminating in his sexual choice. Romantic love is the essence of discrimination and the relationship cannot by its very nature take place on an impersonal basis. The process of idealization in romantic love is based upon the choice of one individual out of all the possible individuals in the world.

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[11] Havelock Ellis, "Analysis of the Sexual Impulse." *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* (New York: Random House, 1942), Vol. I, Part II.

[12] For a fuller analysis of this relationship, see Francis E. Merrill, *Courtship and Marriage* (New York: The Dryden Press, 1949), pp. 54-57.

[13] Robert O. Blood, Jr., "Romance and Premarital Intercourse—Incompatibles?" *Marriage and Family Living*, May 1952, XIV, 105-8.

The sex drive is unquestionably one of the most imperious in the hereditary equipment of the human being. As such, it serves as the nucleus about which the cultural sentiments of romantic love are based. "But what transforms sex into love," suggests Sapir, "is a strange and compulsive identification of the loved one with every kind of attachment that takes the ego out of itself. The intensity of sex becomes an unconscious symbol for every other kind of psychic intensity, and the intensity of love is measured by the intensities of all non-egoistic identifications that have been transferred to it." [15] Under the lash of these combined sexual and cultural stimuli, the individual may be so carried away as to become temporarily impervious to other influences. The preservation of the human species squarely depends upon the sex urge. In the analysis of romantic behavior, this biological fact is taken for granted. It is grist for our mill.[16]

But when we have admitted the presence of these biological factors, we have not answered the question of romantic love. Actually, we have only begun it. We have not explained why John Smith and Mary Jones fall in love at first sight and vow to marry and live happily ever after, why they believe there is no other possible mate for them, why they save theater stubs and dance programs as symbols of their courtship days, why they disregard the advice of their parents and marry someone of another religion, nationality group, or social class—why they do these and a hundred other things. The instinctive explanation is completely insufficient to explain such behavior. Some other explanation must be advanced, one based upon culture and human nature. Romantic love is clearly not instinctive. The instinctive basis of the sex urge has become so overlaid with cultural accumulations by the time the individual has reached adolescence that the one cannot be distinguished from the other.

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[14] Reik, *A Psychologist Looks at Love*, p. 19.

[15] Edward Sapir, "Observations on the Sex Problem in America," *The American Journal of Psychiatry*, November 1928, III, 527.

[16] Cf. Ellis, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, Vol. I, Part II.

The social relationships between the sexes that form the basis of romantic love are the result of thousands of years of refinement, during which many of the contemporary expectations slowly evolved. Romantic lovers believe that men and women who are sexually attracted to one another are "naturally" kind and solicitous, anxious to devote their best efforts to their mutual welfare, and have no other purpose than the safety and comfort of the children brought into the world through their sexual collaboration. Sexual lovers are thought to be selfless toward one another, uniting in their passion all the generosity and affection which are accepted as the traditional roles of husband and wife in our culture.

This assumption is scientifically unfounded. The "natural" manifestations of the sex drive in human beings, stripped to their most elemental terms, are anything but tender, loving, and solicitous. Sex is selfish. The individual who uses another purely as a sexual vehicle is interested only in the release of his own tensions, rarely in the happiness of the other. The personal feelings of the mistress whose appeal is primarily sexual are not considered as important as those of a romantic sweetheart. The presence of the sexual object is welcome only at the time of desire, neither before nor after. Sexual desire is as self-centered as hunger or thirst.

The wide gulf existing between the sex relations of man in his biological and social states is suggested by Briffault: "The attraction between the sexes is not primarily or generally associated with the order of feelings which we denote as 'tender feelings,' affection, love. These have developed comparatively late in the course of organic evolution, and have arisen in relation to entirely different functions. The primitive, and by far the most prevalent, association of the sexual impulse is not with love, but with the opposite feelings of callous cruelty and delight in the infliction and the spectacle of pain." [17] Among many animals, the spectacle of fierce fighting between male and female during the entire course of the sexual relationship is common. In the course of evolution, homo sapiens has come a long way from the murderous sadism of the animal lover for his mate, but the mere absence of such behavior is still a far cry from romantic love. Cultural expectations, rather than biological drives, produce the sentiments we associate with romantic love.

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[17] Robert Briffault, *The Mothers* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1927), I, 118.

Romance and Release

The average man or woman in America does not lead a particularly exciting life. Neither does the average man or woman in any other place. The daily routine of existence in any society, from the mountain Arapesh of New Guinea to the upland villager in Brooklyn Heights, has comparatively few high points. In an effort, deliberate or not, to compensate for the boredom of daily life, different peoples have evolved different means of relaxation and mass euphoria. The Australian primitive has his corroboree, the Roman citizen had his Saturnalia, and the little man of the Third Reich had his party festivals. We have romantic love. The escape from reality on the part of other cultures has, for the most part, been an institutionalized affair, with prescribed rituals and ceremonies that give the individual something to look forward to, to relieve him temporarily of the routine of living. These people, "primitive" or "civilized," go periodically crazy together, as it were, augmenting their individual excitement by contact with other similarly excited persons under socially prescribed conditions. Festivals, games, dances, orgies, carnivals, and the like provide necessary release from the humdrum activities of daily living.[18]

In characteristic fashion, Americans leave this release largely up to the individual. Aided and abetted though he is by the motion picture and other mechanisms of mass release, the individual must seek and find his salvation as an individual, rather than as a member of a functioning group. Romance is a highly acceptable method of finding this release, in contrast to other methods that are not sanctioned by the mores. All of the conditions under which the individual falls in love and marries are socially prescribed, although the application is primarily individual. We seek our romance and establish our families as individuals, a procedure with both the faults and the virtues of our society.

In the normal peacetime routine, the possibility of a romantic love affair, to be followed by an equally romantic marriage, is the most exciting prospect on the proximate or ultimate horizon of the individual. He may actually experience such a romantic courtship and marriage, in which event he considers that life has treated him handsomely, as indeed it has. But if he does not actually have such an experience, he can have it vicariously, not once but any number of times. He can read a book or a magazine, hear a popular song on the radio, or go to a movie. Each time he has any of these experiences, he receives a certain romantic excitement, brought about by partially identifying himself with the hero of the novel, story, song, or motion picture. These substitute satisfactions may not be the real thing, but they will do until the real thing comes along. For many people, these surrogates are the nearest to the real thing they ever get. Such persons may go through life lamenting that they have been deprived of the greatest satisfaction life can give them—a romantic marriage. They have been taught to hope for more than they can reasonably expect.

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[18] William G. Sumner, *Folkways* (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1906), chap. XVII, "Popular Sports, Exhibitions, and Drama."

An observer of the American folkways made this statement concerning our tendency to engage in romantic flights from reality: "A cardinal characteristic of immaturity is dread of reality; the fear or the inability to look facts in the face. It is this dread, on the one hand, and a false romanticism, on the other, which has caused us to surround marriage with a mawkish sentimentality." [19] The belief that happy marriages are made in heaven, that each boy and girl has a preordained affinity, and that the discovery of this affinity will automatically result in perfect marital happiness is unreal in the sense that it ignores such prosaic factors as sheer physical propinquity in romantic love, not to mention other equally fortuitous and prosaic factors.

If John and Mary did not happen to go to the same high school, work in the same store, office, or factory, or live on the same street, they would probably never meet and marry. Romance would never come to either of them, unless it is admitted that it could equally well have come with another person. Such a realistic admission, however, denies a fundamental of the romantic faith—namely, that there is only one ideal husband or wife for everyone and that if an individual does not find such a person the first time, he is in romantic duty bound to try again.

"The point is of course," continues our observer, "that compatibility is not the result of preordination, accident, or mysterious gift, but of design; and this is to conclude that the romantic concept of marriage is false and dangerous." [20] It is false and dangerous, he believes, not in suggesting that an individual may be extremely happy with the husband or wife of his choice but rather in thinking that, if this happiness does not measure up to what we have been taught to expect, something is wrong with the marriage. The quiet pleasures of conjugal happiness are thus in a sense a denial of the romantic faith, which tells us that for the rest of our lives we should continue to burn with the same pure, gemlike flame that flared during the early weeks of marriage. Taking the other for granted in tranquil matrimony is, strictly speaking, against the romantic rules.

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[19] David L. Cohn, *Love in America* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1943), p. 58.

At this point, many lovers and/or sociologists may arise in righteous indignation and wave aloft the torch of romance. It is asserted, for example, that romantic love has a definite function in softening the conflict between adolescent sexual desires and the social conventions that forbid their complete expression.[21] The adolescent who can thus express his sexual urges by projecting them upon his love object thereby relieves his guilt feelings and averts a depreciation of the self. In this sense, romantic love serves as an emotional substitute for the complete sexual relations forbidden by the mores.

The refusal of sexual gratification by the female, furthermore, is both a basic element in the romantic complex and an indication that the female has greater self-control and moral power. In short, "it (romantic love) has not only done no harm as a prerequisite to marriage, but it has mitigated the impact that a too-fast-moving and unorganized conversion to our socio-economic constellations has had upon our whole culture and it has saved monogamous marriage from complete disorganization." [22]

The first part of the above allegation is clearly true—namely, that romantic love serves as an important therapeutic device during adolescence, whereby the individual derives euphoria by finding a love-object that can satisfy his emotional needs without violating the mores. The conclusion that romantic love is therefore vital to the continuance of the family and that it has, indeed, "saved monogamous marriage from complete disorganization" would, however, appear to be still unproved. Like many other social values, romantic love is a two-edged sword in the sense that it embodies some group expectations that are clearly functional, as well as others that are equally disfunctional. Romantic love may help the individual over the difficult adjustments of adolescence. But it may also establish unreal and impossible premises for a sound and permanent marriage.

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[20] *Ibid.*, p. 59.

[21] Hugo G. Beigel, "Romantic Love," *American Sociological Review*, June 1951, XVI, 326-34.

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 333.

The affectionate companionship of husband and wife should certainly increase as the years pass. As the couple live and share the joys and sorrows of adult life, they will have more and more to go on. As their interests become absorbed in their children, with mutual hopes for the health, happiness, and success of the flesh of their flesh, husband and wife will have still greater common interests. As the web of habit binds them closer together in its pleasant and tenacious tyranny, they will be increasingly dependent upon mutual companionship. When this degree of unity and conjugal affection is reached, John and Mary can truthfully say that they cannot get along without each other.

But this felicitous state is reached only after years of marriage. It cannot possibly be discovered when the two have known each other a few hours, weeks, or months. Such considerations of time and adjustment are largely ignored by the romanticist. Conjugal felicity is not romantic at all—if we subsume the unfamiliarity, excitement, emotional tension, passionate jealousy, and manic-depressive states of feeling that characterize romantic love as popularly understood. Conjugal happiness is real and permanent, romantic ecstasy unreal and transitory as the only basis for marriage. As Sumner points out, "Conjugal love . . . is based on esteem, confidence and habit. . . . Conjugal affection makes great demands on the good sense, spirit of accommodation, and good nature of each." [23] At this point, some people have complained that marriage has become "monotonous." But that is the way it should be. [24]

Romance and the Need for Affection

Love is one of the basic needs of the individual in our society. The emphasis upon love varies from one society to another, and our own society places it in a central place in its hierarchy of values. This situation is especially pertinent for the boy or girl in the middle class, where the child is actively conditioned to expect affection and to be unhappy when he is deprived (or thinks he is deprived) thereof.[25] The need for affection is inculcated early in life, and the child initially satisfies this need with his parents. As he grows older, his love objects change, but the need for affection persists.

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[23] Sumner, *Folkways*, p. 363.

[24] Elton Mayo, "Should Marriage Be Monotonous?" *Harper's Magazine*, September 1925, CLI, 420-27.

The search for a marriage mate occupies him during late adolescence, and hence courtship is of paramount importance. Falling in love is psychologically a process of self-completion, whereby the person seeks a mate who will love him, make him feel important, and insure the stability of his ego. He tries to retain this emotional security by finding and marrying someone who will measure up to his conscious and unconscious ideal standards.[26]

The family (especially the middle-class family) thus conditions the individual both to seek love as a basic goal and to fear its withdrawal as a devastating loss. At the same time, our society as a whole tends to withhold love, or at least make it difficult to attain. In the impersonal world of the metropolitan community, life is often so competitive, mobile, and anonymous that the average person experiences an acute lack of the emotional security which he has been conditioned to expect.[27]

This need for affection is especially characteristic of adolescence. This is the period when the boy or girl vacillates between a desire for emancipation from the family and a desire to return to the comforting security of childhood. The adolescent is often tormented by feelings of uncertainty, first as to what his role should be and second as to his success in playing it. He is, furthermore, anxious to demonstrate his outstanding qualities in the eyes of his contemporaries of both sexes. These qualities may range from athletic prowess to personal attractiveness, and the adolescent is often painfully aware of his shortcomings. He may suffer from a sense of personal inadequacy and reach out eagerly for any relationship that will dispel this feeling.[28]

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[25] Arnold W. Green, "The Middle-Class Male Child and Neurosis," *American Sociological Review*, February 1946, XI, 31-41.

[26] Cf. Robert F. Winch, *The Modern Family* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, Inc., 1952), chap. 12, "Psychic and Cultural Origins of Love."

[27] James S. Plant, *Personality and the Cultural Pattern* (New York: The Commonwealth Fund, 1937), pp. 150 ff.

[28] Winch, *The Modern Family*, pp. 367-70.

In a study of adolescent girls in a lower-middle-class subculture, this element of inadequacy and the consequent need for affection is strongly indicated. The personality of the "typical" girl of this group is described as follows: "She experiences high level or pervasive anxiety which stems from her feelings of affectional deprivation, her perception of the world as being hostile or unfriendly to her, the conflict between her desire to express her inner needs and her social environment's requirement that she suppress them." [29]

The craving for love is manifest throughout this study, along with a strong feeling of anxiety because this affection is not forthcoming to the extent the girl believes it should. Both her conscious and unconscious efforts are dedicated to the quest for love. At one stage in her psychosexual development, the adolescent girl may derive this generalized affection from members of her own sex. At a later stage, she seeks it from members of the opposite sex, through dating and romantic love. If she cannot gain the needed affection directly, she may seek it vicariously, through fantasy or daydreaming.[30]

Romantic love is an important element in the search for affection. The lover is aware of his unworthiness, and the thought that a member of the opposite sex is romantically interested in him goes far to relieve his sense of inadequacy. Many of the allegedly wonderful traits of the romantic partner are not visible to other persons, which fact suggests that the lover unconsciously idealizes his beloved and thereby increases his own happiness at the miracle of being loved. The greater the contrast between the adolescent's conception of himself and his conception of the love object, the greater the satisfaction at being adored by this paragon.

The individual thus experiences a strong *need* for love, and this need is met through the process of idealization. The need and the emotion are more important than the particular person who happens to be the love object. The melancholy of the adolescent is an expression of the conflict between his own feeling of unworthiness and the need to be loved. "Love," says Benedek, ". . . is an emotion which resolves the conflict." [31]

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[29] Esther Milner, "Effects of Sex Role and Social Status on the Early Adolescent Personality," *Genetic Psychology Monographs*, November 1949, XL, 279.

[30] *Ibid.*, chap. VII, "The Individual Personality as Composed of Interacting Cultural and Individual Behavior Systems."

[31] Therese Benedek, *Insight and Personality Adjustment* (New York: The Ronald Press, 1946), p. 23.

Romantic Love and Society

Romantic love is an individual sentiment socially acquired. The elements of romantic love are inculcated in the form of socially transmitted customs, attitudes, and beliefs that define the relationships between the sexes both before and after marriage. Every society is characterized by a variety of expectations which its members place upon one another. These expectations are what you expect other persons to do to you under certain circumstances and what you in turn are expected to do to them.[32] The cluster of related beliefs known as romantic love constitutes one such set of expectations. The following analysis will summarize some of its most important characteristics.

Romantic love is found largely in those societies where individual marital preference is highly developed and the status of women correspondingly advanced. Romantic love emphasizes free individual choice between men and women. It is further characterized by strong emotional intensity in both the primary and secondary sexual relationships, and by an insistence upon the permanent and retroactive sexual monopoly of the husband over the wife. The four general cultural elements comprising romantic love are thus: individual preference, high status of women, great emotional intensity, and male sexual monopoly with accompanying erotic jealousy.

Other societies have exhibited some of these manifestations, with numerous variations. Certain Western European countries, notably England and the Scandinavian countries, show in modified form many of the traits of romantic love, mingled with perceptible traces of the older patriarchal culture. With its relative freedom from patriarchal usages, its comparatively classless society, and its tradition of frontier individualism, the United States, more consistently than any other country, has exemplified the conception of romantic love as related to marriage. We may examine the principal romantic criteria in more detail.

1. *Individual Preference*. Romantic love is based upon the individual choice of emotionally free men and women. Romantic marriage is a contract entered into by two people with the power of unrestricted choice. Family dictation is at a minimum under the unwritten rules

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[32] Sumner, *Folkways*, Chapter I, "Fundamental Notions of the Folkways and of the Mores."

of romance, since the two persons are marrying for personal rather than familial, pecuniary, religious, or dynastic reasons. The patriarchal family, with its insistence upon parental decisions in such matters, is clearly incompatible with romantic love. The personal qualities of the husband or wife are of the utmost importance in romance, whereas under the patriarchal system they are either subordinated to other considerations or ignored altogether.

The element of individual marital preference involves a firm belief in love at first sight. "Whoever lov'd," queries Phebe in *As You Like It*, "that lov'd not at first sight?" Under the tradition of romantic love, the individual has been told that some day he will find the right person and that furthermore he will know instantly and indubitably that this is the one. He is psychologically prepared to fall in love deeply, instantly, and perpetually. He has been culturally prepared as to the desirable physical, mental, and moral characteristics of his potential beloved.[33] This emotional receptivity has been brought about by virtually every acculturative agency in our society, from the verbal assurances of family and friends to motion pictures, popular songs, and modern fiction.

2. *High Status of Women.* A patriarchal society is one in which the position of women is by definition low. Romantic love evolved as the patriarchal family declined and the status of daughter, wife, mother, and widow was gradually raised. The individuality of choice so necessary to romantic love is impossible where women are deprived of all preference in those matters which concern them most directly. The assumption that both love partners have distinct personalities is explicitly denied under the patriarchal system, where women are considered innately deficient in many such elements.

In societies where woman was considered not quite human—as a marginal creature between the beasts and the male human beings—individuality of marital choice was largely restricted to the male. Sexual equality in economic activity, religious practices, government, literature, or the fine arts was not even considered under the patriarchal system, except in isolated instances. The increasing economic and social independence of women has enabled them to develop more completely as individual personalities, able to play a responsible role in the choice of a mate as well as in the conduct of family affairs.

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[33] Ira S. Wile, "Love at First Sight as Manifest in *The Tempest*," *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, April 1938, VIII, 341-56.

3. *Emotional Intensity*. The above characteristics of romantic love are largely social in origin, deriving from a particular culture pattern. The other two characteristics—emotional intensity and emotional monopoly—are at first glance more individual than social, since they apparently refer to individual states of feeling, produced by reactions to members of the opposite sex. In reality, however, these aspects of romantic love are every bit as "social" as individual preference and the high status of women. The emotional intensity accompanying romantic love is partially the result of inhibitions placed upon the direct release of the sex tension before marriage. This repression tends to intensify the desirability of the loved one by arousing passionate anticipations that can be realized only after marriage.

In another sense, emotional intensity is also a social product. The romantic conventions of "love at first sight," "a world well lost for love," and "all the world loves a lover" are clearly social in origin, even though they find expression as individual attitudes. These group expectations have come down to us as an integral part of the cultural heritage of Western Europe and contemporary America, which we absorb almost with the air we breathe. The emotional intensity with which courtship and marriage are invested results in judging the state of matrimony largely in terms of romantic affection. Romance is an integral part of our mores, whereas with other peoples it maintains a shadowy existence on the periphery of the family.

This does not mean that sudden and violent emotional relationships between men and women are not universally found and recognized. The group wisdom of the most primitive peoples takes these aberrations into account. Even the Greeks had a word for it. As Sumner points out, they "conceived of it [love] as a madness by which a person was afflicted through the caprice or malevolence of some god or goddess."[34] The state of being romantically in love exhibits many characteristics of certain pathological mental conditions known as trance or dissociation phenomena. Such behavior in our society is considered perfectly normal. In other societies, however, romantic behavior is looked upon as an unfortunate visitation that upsets the lives immediately concerned and, hence, as abnormal and undesirable. The lovers are ignored, pitied, feared, incarcerated, or shunned. Their conduct is a serious departure from the norm.

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[34] Sumner, *Folkways*, p. 362.

4. *Emotional Monopoly.* A natural outgrowth of the emotional intensity with which romantic love is invested is an emotional monopoly of thoughts and feelings. Competition of outsiders for the body, thoughts, emotions, and even the dreams of the beloved cannot be tolerated. "When a love-relationship is at its height," remarks Freud, "no room is left for any interest in the surrounding world; the pair of lovers are sufficient unto themselves." [35] Nothing more delightful could possibly occur to the lover than to be cast up on a desert island with his lady and remain there for all eternity.

This element of emotional monopoly also implies a perfervid jealousy of the person and thoughts of the loved one. The romantic cannot reconcile himself to the thought that his sweetheart, fiancée, or wife ever cast languishing glances at any other member of the opposite sex. The pervasive influence of the double standard makes such lapses on the part of the man considerably more palatable to the romantic mind than similar excursions of the woman. Sexual jealousy of the woman is considered perfectly natural by persons in our culture, although actually this monopolistic attitude is culturally conditioned in the same way as any other aspect of romantic love. "The demand that the girl shall bring with her into marriage with one man," remarks Freud, "no memory of sexual relations with another is . . . nothing but a logical consequence of the exclusive right of possession over a woman which is the essence of monogamy—it is but an extension of this monopoly on to the past." [36]

But if such attitudes were instinctive, rather than culturally conditioned, then presumably all men would possess them in substantially the same form. Among many primitive peoples, however, no vestige of romantic jealousy exists. The wife is often considered an item of negotiable property, to be disposed of in much the same manner as any other valuable item. Under certain circumstances, the primitive husband may offer his wife for the night to a visiting stranger and will be insulted if the offer is refused.[37] The same husband may be highly incensed if the stranger makes advances to the wife without first asking his permission. Such an encroachment violates the property sense of the husband, rather than any solicitude for the person of his wife.[38]

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[35] Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (New York: Jonathan Cape and Harrison Smith, 1930), p. 80.

[36] Freud, "The Taboo of Virginity," *Collected Papers* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1925), IV, 217-35.

[37] Edward Westermarck, *The History of Human Marriage* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1901), pp. 73-75.

We have examined some of the characteristics of romantic love and its role in courtship and marriage. The expectations making up romantic love do not constitute an omnipresent force acting upon the premarital lives of every individual. For example, romantic love appears to be more characteristic of courtship in the middle class than in the "working class" or lower level groups described by Kinsey. Furthermore, each individual experiences the elements of the culture pattern in a different way, depending upon such variables as rural-urban residence, ethnic background, religious affiliation, educational attainment, and economic status. Hence, no two couples react exactly the same in romantic courtship. The emotional needs of individuals also differ. One person may be more insecure than another and thereby have a deeper need for the assurance of romantic love. Every couple does not act in accordance with the romantic patterns outlined above, nor does every individual feel a sense of romantic deprivation in the day-to-day realities of marriage.[39]

We have thus analyzed an element in the over-all pattern of American culture. All societies exhibit a certain internal consistency in their culture patterns, although the degree of this consistency varies. Our own culture is so complex and is changing so rapidly that many inconsistencies and incongruities arise between its various elements. Nevertheless, romantic love is still a fairly consistent constituent. Among the elements common both to American culture and the romantic complex is individual choice. In incorporating this element into courtship and marriage, the culture is merely expressing in another way a value that is already important in such seemingly remote institutional patterns as economic behavior, religious independence, and political democracy. Romantic love is another expression of a democratic society.[40]

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[38] Franz Carl Müller-Lyer, *The Evolution of Modern Marriage* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1930), pp. 28-29.

[39] Winch, *The Modern Family*, pp. 373-76.

[40] Cf. William L. Kolb, "Family Sociology, Marriage Education, and the Romantic Complex: a Critique," *Social Forces*, October 1950, XXIX, 65-72.

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◆ 8 ◆

COURTSHIP AND DATING

Courtship and marriage in our society cannot be fully understood without an understanding of the role of dating. In the course of every week, millions of young people in the United States have one or more dates, during which they go some place outside the home, spend some money, and enjoy themselves in various ways. The nature of these situations is subject to considerable variation. Some dates represent the first, shy contacts of boys and girls in their early teens, who escort each other (the phrase is used advisedly) to a movie, a dance, or a school play. Others represent a more advanced degree of social and sexual maturity, and involve college boys and girls who are already seasoned veterans of the great competitive game of dating. Other dates include young men and women in their late teens or early twenties who have already (officially or unofficially) chosen each other as prospective husbands and wives. With them, the date has much of the emotional intimacy of marriage.

The Nature of Dating

The date thus involves a variety of situations in which the age, status, motives, and seriousness are all subject to variations. Some writers have stressed particular situations, whereas other observers have emphasized other situations. Some students of courtship thus state that dating is a purely competitive and exploitative relationship, devoid of any but the most remote connection with marriage. Others maintain that dating is an integral part of courtship, since persons continue to have dates up to the time of marriage. The difficulties of definition may be partially resolved by stating that dating is an evolving activity which has a number of forms and includes behavior at different stages in the progression from early adolescence to marriage. Such variety necessarily makes for a certain lack of precision in the definition of dating, but under the circumstances this cannot be helped.

In its broadest terms, therefore, dating "is the process of paired association between members of the opposite sex before marriage. A first appointment between two teen-age children or the last prearranged meeting of an engaged couple before marriage are both dates." [1] The motives of the participants in these two representative situations are obviously very different; in the first case, marriage is ordinarily far from the thoughts of the couple, whereas in the second, the two persons have already chosen each other, and the date is a final prelude to a new status. In its earlier stages, dating implies a high degree of freedom for both participants, with no implied assumption by parents, members of the community, or themselves of any obligation other than having a good time. In the later states of dating, an engaged couple clearly has by definition an obligation to each other, which may or may not be formally expressed in the announced engagement. Both situations, however, represent forms of "paired association" and hence come under the general heading of dates.

Dating is a characteristically American pattern, at least insofar as its earlier and carefree stages are concerned. This does not mean, of course, that other societies do not have recognized culture patterns whereby young and unmarried people may enjoy each other's company with no definitive commitment to marriage. The degree and intensity of this behavior, however, are probably unique with America, if only because no other society has the money, the technological equipment in the form of automobiles and motion picture theaters, and the freedom of marital choice of our own. The social expectations that govern dating are in the process of evolution in a dynamic society. As a result of the rapid development of the practice of dating, the folkways and mores related thereto are still in a chaotic state, and the meanings attached to the elements of dating are not clearly defined. Young people have no established definitions, and as a result their behavior is often confused.

Dating is a characteristically American phenomenon in another sense. It is an expression of that individual freedom in personal relationships which marks our society from the junior high school to the altar and, in numerous cases, to the divorce courts. Dating gives the adolescent a wide freedom to choose his companion for the evening, without interference by parents or folkways. As he progresses toward serious courtship and marriage, the individual enjoys very much the same freedom, at least in theory, and can pick the mate with whom he falls romantically in love. In a sense, such considerations as family status, economic attainment, religious affiliation, and physical propinquity curtail the freedom of choice in dating, just as they do in marriage. But the principal of freedom nevertheless remains in theory and is important in any analysis of the pattern of dating.

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[1] Samuel H. Lowrie, "Dating Theories and Student Responses," *American Sociological Review*, June 1951, p. 337.

Dating has arisen out of a changing society, in which the established folkways of a stable, primary group society have given way to new responses and new situations. We have analyzed some of these factors in chapter 6, where we considered urbanization, secularization, mobility, and equality between the sexes in terms of their combined impact upon courtship. These factors are partially responsible for the evolution and popularity of dating. Dating is also an expression of the American cult of happiness, which, as we have seen, is the most important single factor in the search for a mate. Dating is clearly oriented about the cult of pleasure, since it is undertaken largely for hedonistic purpose, with a minimum of obligation to the partner or society as a whole.

Dating is an act carried out for its own sake. In its initial stages at least, dating is an end in itself, rather than a means to the end of courtship and marriage. The motives of dating vary according to such factors as the age of the participants, the social setting (for example, whether rural or metropolitan), and the social status (whether both persons come from the same social class). At different times and under different conditions, therefore, dating may vary widely. When we state that dating is a pleasurable and irresponsible relationship, we are speaking of one phase of the process. When two persons have reached the stage of engagement, however, their dates carry more serious overtones.

The significance of dating also varies in terms of the regional setting. In the rural south, for example, girls are ready for marriage at an earlier age than their urban and northern sisters. Hence a high school date south of the Mason-Dixon line may carry more portentous implications than a similar affair in a northern, metropolitan community. Educational attainment, in general, is higher in the urban north than in the rural south. In the latter setting, the girl looks upon her companion at the movies as a potential husband long before her northern counterpart regards her date as anything more than a casual friend. As the social context differs, a dance or an evening at the movies may have very different implications.[2]

The Competitive Aspects of Dating

The culture pattern of the United States stresses competition as a principal means of acquiring status. In chapter 4, we examined some of these aspects of American culture in terms of their impact upon the family, with particular reference to individual choice in marriage. Competition is also evident in other parts of the culture pattern, notably in connection with dating. This activity may be viewed as an attempt by the adolescent to acquire status in the group by being seen in public with an attractive member of the opposite sex. The implication is that the ability to attract such companionship is a status-conferring characteristic, and the person has thereby succeeded in raising himself in the estimation of the group.[3]

In this sense, dating is part of the struggle for self-assurance. The ego of the adolescent is enhanced by his success in the game, the rules and goals of which are tacitly defined by his peers. Adolescence is the period when the ego is especially uncertain because of the disparity between his ideals and his personality as he actually conceives it. The adolescent feels that he is unworthy of love because of his "evil" sexual desires, his unattractive appearance, and his lack of sophistication. The date is one way in which the ego is bolstered and the security of the personality enhanced. In this process, the individual receives love (as symbolized by the date) as a reward for his ability to "succeed." The date is thus its own reward. It is both the goal that is sought and the criterion by which success is defined.[4]

Dating has been described by Margaret Mead as a "situational" relationship. That is, the person who seeks a date, complains because he cannot get one, or denigrates the available dates is not especially concerned with individual boys and girls *as such*. Instead, he is thinking in terms of a "situation," in which the other partner will possess the characteristics defined by the group as desirable for dating purposes. These characteristics differ from one age group to another, as the jolly tomboy is popular at one stage and not at another. The qualities in demand for the dating situation are not necessarily the most adequate for a spouse. A good "date" may or may not make a good wife. The important point for the dater, however, is that he shall be publicly seen "in a situation" that will reflect prestige upon him. In many ways, the date is not a *personal* but an *impersonal* relationship. It is the situation that counts.[5]

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[2] Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, "Early Marriages Most Frequent in the South," *Statistical Bulletin*, June 1945.

[3] Cf. Geoffrey Gorer, *The American People* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1948), chap. 4, "Love and Friendship."

[4] Cf. Margaret Mead, *Male and Female* (New York: William Morrow & Company, 1949), chap. 14, "Precourtship Behavior and Adult Sex Demands."

The importance of the date varies with the situation. If the individual is not known to the other persons who will see him with an attractive girl, he will obviously derive less status than when he is known. The date may therefore be more important in a primary community than in a metropolitan center. The competitive game of dating may thus have greater implications in small towns and cities, where the daters can be seen by their peers. The game reaches its peak on a coeducational campus, where the status-conscious world of fraternities and sororities establishes the setting.[6] Here individual prestige is abetted by group efforts to enhance the status of the organization by dating only with the "best" fraternities and sororities. Every effort is made to keep the individual from dating with a member of a less satisfactory sorority or (heaven forbid) of no sorority at all.[7]

Dating behavior on the coeducational campus has been cogently described by Willard Waller as "the rating-and-dating complex." [8] This concept refers to the hierarchy of dating desirability tacitly established in coeducational colleges and universities. As a result of participation in athletics, campus activities, fraternity life, and other extracurricular functions, boys easily tend to gravitate to certain positions on the scale of dating desirability. Since the initiative lies principally with the male, however, the rating of girls is even more crucial. Good looks, attractive personal qualities, membership in elite sororities, clothes, and dancing ability are some of the obvious qualifications for high ranking. Sexual attractiveness and the willingness to engage in petting with comparative strangers are more ambiguous assets, since the girl who practices indiscriminate petting may have many dates but may fail to "rate" at the same time.[9]

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[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 286-87.

[6] See Robert F. Winch, *The Modern Family* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1952), Appendix, "Rating, Dating, and College Fraternities," pp. 489-93.

[7] For a discussion of courtship on the campus, see Clifford Kirkpatrick and Theodore Caplow, "Courtship in a Group of Minnesota Students," *American Journal of Sociology*, September 1945, LI, 114-25.

[8] Willard Waller, "The Rating and Dating Complex," *American Sociological Review*, October 1937, II, 727-34.

The "rating-and-dating complex" tends to exaggerate the exploitative attitudes associated with relationships between the sexes. The exploitation is not necessarily a one-way street, with the girl offering sexual favors in return for entertainment. The association of the sexes, especially where the rating-and-dating complex is strongly entrenched, is marked by a strong tone of mutual self-interest.[10] Both sexes are often equally shrewd in demanding and getting a *quid pro quo* in the dating relationship. These generalizations do not apply with equal cogency to all coeducational campuses, much less to the behavior of all of the boys and girls thereon. Nevertheless, an understanding of the competitive character of dating would be incomplete without a reference to this phenomenon.[11]

Dating as a competitive situation is also accompanied by a "line," whereby each endeavors to captivate the other and convince him of the attractive, sophisticated, and generally status-conferring qualities of his (the partner's) personality. Some of the elements in the line are the original expressions of the individuals concerned, whereas other elements reflect the conversational gambits of the local group, the quips of the radio comedians, and the clichés of the heroes and heroines of the motion pictures. Neither party is expected literally to believe the line, and the person who does so is considered naïve and loses several points in the dating game. At the same time, each must give at least lip-service to the version of the line as purveyed by his or her date. The person whose line is too patently false undergoes a depreciation of his ego, which in turn jeopardizes one of the fundamental reasons for dating.[12]

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[9] Cf. Stuart D. Loomis and Arnold W. Green, "The Pattern of Mental Conflict in a Typical State University," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, July 1947, XLII, 342-55.

[10] Willard Waller, *The Family*, rev. Reuben Hill (New York: The Dryden Press, 1951), pp. 148-55.

[11] See Manford H. Kuhn, "How Mates Are Sorted," *Family, Marriage and Parenthood*, eds. Howard Becker and Reuben Hill (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1948), pp. 257-61.

The "Aim-Inhibited" Aspects of Dating

Waller has suggested that dating is not "true" courtship, since it is not supposed to end in marriage.[13] We do not propose to limit dating to those relationships that do not have marriage as their goal, but instead include all forms of "paired association" between the sexes. Most dates are not intended to end in marriage, and the majority begin and end in a casual fashion. Some dates, however, no matter what the participants may initially intend, nevertheless *do* eventuate in marriage. The concept of the date as used here subsumes all of these eventualities. At the same time, however, the great majority of dates involve no more mutual obligation than a good time. These affairs have many of the characteristics of "true" courtship, as that process was understood a few generations ago. But the resemblance is largely coincidental.

An important distinction between most dating and "true" courtship is that dating is what Waller has happily termed an "aim-inhibited" relationship. By this phrase, he meant that the date is designed to stop short of any emotional involvement that might terminate in engagement and marriage.[14] Dating is conceived as an end in itself, an activity that is fun for the participants. Much of this enjoyment evolves from the very fact that dating does not ordinarily imply any responsibility on either side, and the boy and the girl are free to have as many dates as they want, with no strings attached. In order to limit this involvement and inhibit the aim of dating, however, the participants must know what they are doing and must understand the unwritten rules. If they fail to do so, they may be hurt.

In this sense, dating is an attempt to have one's cake and eat it too. The date allows boys and girls to engage in many exciting and unchaperoned relationships with members of the opposite sex before marriage. In the course of these relationships, they may engage in various personal intimacies, ranging all the way from a good-night kiss to complete sexual union. They may, in short, enjoy such personal intimacy as was not sanctioned by the recent mores, even for couples who were formally engaged. These relationships carry with them a minimum of responsibility to the families of the participants, to the community as a whole, or to the daters. A maximum of hedonistic behavior is thus equated with a minimum of socially-recognized responsibility. Dating is a part of the great pleasure cult of contemporary America, in which each participant seeks the maximum of enjoyment with the minimum of obligation.

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[12] Geoffrey Gorer, *The American People*, pp. 116-17.

[13] Waller, "The Rating and Dating Complex," *American Sociological Review*, p. 729.

[14] Waller, *The Family*, pp. 148-49.

This pattern is based, however, on the concept of aim-inhibition, and without this principle and its substantial observance, dating could not continue. Aim-inhibition in dating operates on two levels: (a) sexual, and (b) marital. On the first level, the sexual relationships are supposed to be confined to secondary manifestations (that is, petting) and to stop short of complete sexual intercourse. The second level of aim-inhibition is based on the aforementioned assumption that marriage is not the goal of dating and, hence, the participants are absolved of responsibility in this direction. The daters must therefore maintain an emotional aloofness, at least to the extent of not falling "seriously" in love on every date.

These taboos are rendered more difficult by the changing social setting. The prohibition against premarital sexual intercourse is at least as old as the Christian ethic, which considered such behavior to be among the most deadly of sins.[15] The greater freedom now accorded the adolescent at a time when his sexual impulses are at their height makes premarital chastity more difficult. The absence of chaperonage, the privacy of the automobile, and the tacit sanction of petting increase the preliminary stimulation for behavior not sanctioned by the mores.

This combination of stimulation and restraint produces a new type of situation, wherein the element of aim-inhibition is emphasized. The culture has evolved an intricate system of social patterns by which the conduct of the boy and girl is first stimulated and then controlled. The chief responsibility for maintaining the relationship on the aim-inhibited level rests with the girl. She must interpret the rules in a series of dates that often involves her entire adolescence and early adult years.[16]

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[15] See W. E. H. Lecky, *History of European Morals* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1870), II, 357-58.

On the marital level, the maintenance of the culturally-approved taboo in dating is considered especially important among the middle and upper classes. This segment of the population is concerned with upward mobility, both for boys and girls. Mobility is ordinarily hindered, if not completely interrupted, if young people marry too early, when they are both in high school. Under these circumstances, the corresponding urge to quit school and go to work is very strong, especially if children are born to the teen-age spouses.

The families are thus concerned, lest their children marry too early and thereby deprive themselves (especially the boys) of the benefits of higher education. This attitude is not so strong among the working classes, where the boys ordinarily expect to go to work during or shortly after finishing high school. Furthermore, aim-inhibition of sexual behavior is considerably weaker among the working classes than in the middle and upper levels, a factor which tends to bring about early marriages among the lower levels.[17] Like many other aspects of dating and courtship, aim-inhibition tends to differ between social classes.

Dating and Petting

The problem of aim-inhibition is most immediate in the relationships between dating and petting. The latter behavior has been defined by Kinsey as "any sort of physical contact which does not involve a union of genitalia but in which there is a deliberate attempt to effect erotic arousal." [18] In these terms, petting may range from kissing to erotic activity which stops just short of complete sexual intercourse.

Prior to the appearance of the Kinsey report, the scientific knowledge on the extent and implications of petting was highly impressionistic. Most commentators relied on informal observations conducted in a few fraternity and sorority houses, taverns, and secluded parking places. Many of the strictures against alleged increase in the "immorality" of the younger generation were based upon the patent increase in these manifestations to even the most superficial observer. Casual petting, in the form of hand-holding and kissing, has unquestionably increased in public, as many of the former restraints have been lifted. The corollary assumption on the part of these amateur researchers is that premarital sexual intercourse has increased proportionately with petting. This assumption appears to be false.[19]

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[16] Mead, *Male and Female*, pp. 290-91.

[17] Alfred C. Kinsey, *et al.*, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Company, 1948), chap. 10, "Social Level and Sexual Outlet."

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 531.

Petting seems, on the contrary, to be a *substitute* for premarital sexual intercourse and not (ordinarily) a *stimulus* to such behavior. Petting is prevalent among the middle and upper levels of the population, among adolescents who are either in college or who will eventually go to college. Petting does not appear to be an important form of sexual behavior among what Kinsey calls the "lower level" of the population, whose members consider this behavior "unnatural" or even vaguely perverted. Sexual intercourse, however, is considered a "natural" form of behavior among those groups which have not finished grade school or high school. There is nothing magical in the fact of attending an institution of higher learning, and college attendance is merely a symbolic representation of other differences between the social levels. One of these differences is in the field of sexual behavior. Education is merely a convenient statistical measure of these patterns.[20]

Differences in sexual behavior are striking illustrations of the *ethos* of the subcultures. We have seen in chapter 4 that the culture of American society is still strongly influenced by the expectations of the middle class. One of these patterns involves the deliberate postponement of present satisfactions for the sake of (presumably) greater future satisfactions. The most obvious form of such behavior is the saving of money, whereby the thrifty person resists the temptation of present satisfactions in order to increase his capital for future satisfactions. Such inhibitions are not so strong among the lower levels, who tend to enjoy the satisfactions of the moment by spending their money and even by mortgaging their future through installment payments.[21]

The parallel between the social and the sexual behavior of the middle and lower levels is clear and fairly consistent. The middle-class virtue of saving has its counterpart in sexual continence, whereby these groups postpone the satisfactions of sexual intercourse from the premarital to the marital state. Petting is the means by which this end is accomplished in the majority of cases. Preservation of the virginity of the female is a symbolic accompaniment of this attempt to reserve the highest sexual satisfaction until sanctioned by the mores. The middle and upper levels are also afraid of venereal disease and premarital pregnancy, but these fears have been largely dispelled by the medical cures for venereal disease and the widespread knowledge of contraception. Despite the partial removal of these former impediments to sexual intercourse, however, some 33 per cent of the college level males *do not* have complete sex relations before marrige.[22] The virginity of both the male and female undoubtedly has an important symbolic role in this continence.

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[19] *Ibid.*, p. 541.

[20] *Ibid.*, chap. 10.

[21] See Allison Davis, "Child Rearing in the Class Structure of American Society," *The Family in a Democratic Society* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1949), pp. 56-69.

The implications of this aim-inhibited behavior may extend far beyond the adolescent years of dating and petting and color the marital life of the middle-class couple. The adolescent patterns of petting place the major responsibility for control upon the girl. She is supposed to yield a little but not too much, and is expected to put a stop to sexual relationships before they go too far. The cultural patterns cause the boy to accept these controls by the girl and to value those girls who exert them. Boys do not ordinarily seek an easy and complete conquest, especially from girls of their own social level.

Hence the standards of control are tacitly accepted by both parties, and the terms of the relationship are set by the girl. It has been suggested that, after years of such self-control, it is difficult for the middle-class girl to change her behavior in marriage and accept the complete sexual surrender that is defined as desirable in her subculture. As Margaret Mead comments, "the complete total relaxation of feminine surrender . . . is hardly available to women who have had to live through years of bridling their every impulse to yield and surrender." [23]

The relative importance of petting as a form of premarital behavior has increased in recent decades. One reason for this increase is the rise in the proportion of the population currently attending college and planning to do so. As we have noted, petting is especially characteristic of this segment of the population, which numbered only about 5 per cent of the total age group (17-22) a generation ago. At the present time, approximately 15 per cent of this age group is attending college, with a proportionate number in high school planning to attend college.[24] Hence the number of young persons currently engaging in petting as an accompaniment of dating is larger than ever before. In addition, the middle-class folkways are being widely disseminated throughout all the subcultures by the mass communication agencies. Young people of all walks of life try to act like middle- and upper-class adolescents.

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[22] Kinsey, *et al.*, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*, pp. 542-46.

[23] Mead, *Male and Female*, p. 294.

Petting has been a characteristic of the college level for several decades. During this period, our society has seen two world wars and a depression, not to mention the social changes resulting from the accelerating rate of technological development. With these massive changes in the social setting, it would seem that the sexual mores regarding premarital intercourse, petting, and other related manifestations would have undergone corresponding changes. This does not seem to have been the case. Dating among the middle and upper levels in the twenties was accompanied by considerable petting, but the rate of sexual intercourse was comparatively low for the males. Essentially similar patterns seem to have continued over the next generation, as the youth of the twenties became the parents of contemporary adolescent boys and girls. The mores of sexual behavior are very stable.[25]

The Social Functions of Dating

The principal social function of courtship is to find a mate with whom the individual may experience the happiness which he has been taught to expect as the principal goal of marriage. There are other and related functions of courtship in our society, but this is the central one. Likewise, dating has one central function and several ancillary ones. The central function is to enjoy oneself and, at the same time, to receive the emotional assurance that is such an important need of the adolescent ego. All behavior answers a need, which the individual has either received in his biological equipment or has absorbed from his cultural milieu. We may consider the social functions of dating in terms of these central needs.[26]

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[24] Bureau of the Census, "Educational Attainment of the Civilian Population: April, 1947," *Current Population Reports: Population Characteristics*, Series P-20, No. 15, May 4, 1948.

[25] Kinsey, *et al., Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*, chap. 11.

1. *The Need to Be Loved.* Dating is a form of heterosexual behavior that is especially characteristic of the adolescent years. Adolescence is a period of extreme self-abasement and depreciation of the ego. It is the time when the aspirations are highest and the performance is lowest, at least in the eyes of the adolescent. The onset of biological maturity has increased the sexual urges, which are defined in the middle-class subculture as evil. The adolescent also has grandiose dreams of future achievement in his chosen occupation, but he is socially not able to realize these dreams. He is still defined by society, his parents, and himself as a child (or at least not an adult), and hence he experiences great frustration. The combination of these biological and cultural factors causes the adolescent to be depressed and to need the assurance that comes from being loved.[27] Dating is one form this assurance may take.

2. *The Need to Be Admired.* Closely related to the need to be loved is the need to be admired. The same combination of factors that leads to excessive self-deprecation and hence to a need for love also leads to a need for admiration. Part of this admiration may come from his own sex-group, as boys look up to their comrades who are successful on the athletic field. No such ready means of admiration are open to adolescent girls in our society, and the traditional virtues of cooking, homemaking, and sewing a fine seam have largely been displaced by the distinction arising from success in dating. The mere fact that the adolescent boy or girl is able to get a date thus tends to produce considerable psychic satisfaction. Dating is an indication that one is successful in the great game of being loved.[28]

3. *The Need for New Experience.* In societies where the most important emotional needs are *not* based upon heterosexual relationships, in or out of marriage, the individual is able to marry with little or no experience in this field. This is especially true of the female

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[26] In one sense, dating and courtship are directed toward the search of a mate who will provide happiness; hence, the functions are identical. In the present context, however, we shall consider dating as it occurs in the earlier years, before the search is *consciously* directed toward a mate.

[27] Esther Milner, "Effects of Sex Role and Social Status on the Early Adolescent Personality," *Genetic Psychology Monographs*, November 1949, XL, 231-325.

[28] Gorer, *The American People*, pp. 106-10.

members of a patriarchal society, who are often betrothed by their parents to men whom they have never seen. Under such conditions, the male may have premarital experience with women other than the one who will become his wife, but these women are often of a lower social class. In our own society, it is considered important that both boys and girls have considerable experience with members of the opposite sex, so that they may be able to choose wisely in marriage. Dating provides the means for bringing this situation about and thus performs a definite social function. In the course of premarital experience, an attractive girl or boy may have more or less intimate experience with scores of members of the opposite sex. It is not clear just how, if at all, this experience increases the marital happiness of the individuals concerned. The important consideration is that people *think* it does.

4. *The Need for Emotional Maturity.* In the course of gaining this experience, the individual presumably acquires added emotional maturity from dating. Maturity is conceived as an educational process, whereby boys and girls learn to associate with the opposite sex and develop good manners, social poise, and knowledge of the emotional reactions of others. In a study of dating among a sample of high school and college boys and girls, to "learn to adjust" and to "gain poise or ease" were frequently given as reasons for dating, in addition to such obvious purposes as seeking a mate, affection, or sexual intimacies.[29] Dating obviously gives the individual varied experience with members of the opposite sex before he finally selects a mate. This experience occurs, however, in the cultural context of romantic love, and the individual is often so bemused by romantic expectations that the enhancement of emotional security is dubious.

Dating is thus widely regarded as an educational process which is beneficial to the adolescent because it performs many desirable functions. These functions have been stated to be: "broader experience, enriched personality, greater poise and balance, more and more varied opportunities to mix socially, increased ability to adjust to others under diverse circumstances, reduced emotional excitement on meeting or associating with those of the opposite sex, greater ability to judge individuals of the opposite sex objectively and sensibly, added prestige among those his own age, wider acquaintance, and a broader and thereby sounder choice of a mate." [30] Dating is a sort of pleasurable trial-and-error process, during which the individual learns to match his own personality against members of the opposite sex. In this matching process, considerable insight allegedly results for both parties.[31]

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[29] Lowrie, "Dating Theories and Student Responses," Table 1.

The Difficulties of Dating

Dating is carried on by human beings in their most sensitive years. Many of the needs whose satisfaction is sought in dating cannot be so easily assuaged. Frustrations as well as realizations accompany dating experience, whether conducted in the first callow blush of adolescence or in the greater maturity of the college or university. Insecurity as well as security may arise from dating; emotional conflict as well as satisfaction may accompany this process; and bereavement may follow contentment when the relationship is abruptly broken. When such extravagant expectations are based upon two young and formative personalities, the possibilities for unhappiness are great. We may explore some of the difficulties that may arise in dating.[32]

1. *Role Conflicts in Dating*. The social patterns associated with dating and courtship are in a state of rapid development. Dating is so new that definitive social patterns have not yet grown up. As a result, the participants are often uncertain of their roles and how they shall play them. In a primary society, the folkways and mores of courtship are clearly established, and the person is usually aware of the expectations associated with his major roles. This assurance is lacking in dating, and as a result there are many misunderstandings. These difficulties are especially apparent with the boy or girl who has little experience with dating in high school and then begins to date in college. Such an inexperienced person is often at a disadvantage with those who are more conversant with the rules of the game.

Dating is accompanied by a "line," which is often couched in the language of love. The compliments that are given and received by two experienced exponents of dating are very much the same as those which two lovers would exchange before marriage. The verbal thrust and parry of the line are all very well for boys and girls who know what the conventions are and understand their own role in the dating relationship. Those who take the language of love seriously, however, are at a disadvantage, for they may confuse the date with "true" courtship. When their companion overwhelms them with expressions of admiration and protestations of affection, they may believe him. Although dating is an aim-inhibited relationship, this fact is often obscured by the line.[33] The expectations that go with dating are confused and not universally understood. In this respect, the roles reflect the changing social setting.

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[30] *Ibid.*, p. 337.

[31] Cf. Meyer F. Nimkoff and Arthur L. Wood, "Courtship and Personality," *American Journal of Sociology*, January 1948, LIII, 263-69.

[32] Cf. Kirkpatrick and Caplow, "Courtship in a Group of Minnesota Students."

2. *Emotional Conflicts in Dating.* The persons engaged in the dating relationship are, furthermore, complicated human beings, each with a unique history of emotional development. This development may have been complicated by a partial failure to break the tie that, in infancy and childhood, often holds the individual closely to the parent of the opposite sex.[34] The boy may still be so emotionally dependent upon his mother that he seeks (unconsciously) to find a mother-substitute in every girl he meets. The girl may be so devoted to her father that she judges every boy adversely in terms of his failure to measure up to the father-image. Dating is one way in which the individual achieves emotional emancipation from home and parents. It has been suggested that such emancipation is harder to achieve for boys than for girls and, furthermore, that emancipation need not be as complete for girls as for boys. It has been suggested that girls may merely "transfer their dependency from father to husband" and thereby make a satisfactory emotional adjustment.[35]

Other conflicts may arise in dating. Adolescence is a time of personal insecurity, as noted, when the gap between the ego-ideal and the idea of the self is greater than at any other period. Boys and girls are often shy and insecure when they are dating, and the self-depreciation accompanying the date may be greater than the self-enhancement deriving therefrom. Young people are often brutally frank, and the adolescent who is found wanting in matters of dress, personal attractiveness, or poise may experience a strong feeling of depression. The group defines dating as of paramount importance, and the individual who fails (or thinks he fails) thereby loses a great deal of inner security at a time when he needs it most. This "trial-and-error courtship"[36] is an expression of the individualism of our society, where the mate is sought with no assistance from other persons. Rewards and penalties alike are high.

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[33] Gorer, *The American People*, p. 111.

[34] Robert F. Winch, "The Relation Between Courtship Behavior and Attitudes Toward Parents Among College Men," *American Sociological Review*, April 1943, VIII, 164-74.

[35] Robert F. Winch, "Some Data Bearing on the Oedipus Hypothesis," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, July 1950, XLV, 481-89.

3. *Dating Rejection.* The most potentially traumatic situation is that in which the individual fails to date at all. In one coeducational institution, student informants were unanimous in stating that the majority of boys and girls did not have dates on campus. The reason for this situation apparently rested in the fact that the majority of students of both sexes did not measure up to the dating standards set by the leading men and women on the campus. Rather than ask a girl who did not "rate," the average boy did not have any dates in the campus community because he was afraid to lose prestige by appearing with an unsuitable girl. Many girls were equally unwilling to be seen with a boy who did not measure up to campus standards of male attractiveness. Hence in a large community composed exclusively of coeducational students, the majority had no social life whatever.[37]

This general situation does not apply to some of the men's colleges on the eastern seaboard. In these institutions, campus prestige is derived from athletic ability, extracurricular success, and membership in fraternities, clubs, and senior honor societies.[38] In many coeducational institutions, however, campus prestige for both men and women is almost wholly a function of success in dating. Dating is a manifestation of a competitive society, in which the individual competes for attention. The boy or girl who is unwilling to date because of fear of rejection undergoes a considerable diminution of the ego. Many young people who are patients at the mental health clinics of the educational institution are suffering from what is, in the last analysis, loss of prestige and a consequent lack of emotional security.

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[36] Waller, *The Family*, p. 147.

[37] Stuart D. Loomis and Arnold W. Green, "The Pattern of Mental Conflict in a Typical State University," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, XLII, p. 346.

[38] E. Y. Hartshorne, "Undergraduate Society and the College Culture," *American Sociological Review*, June 1943, VIII, 321-32.

"Truly," it is remarked, "the rating-dating complex is the stuff of tragedy."[39]

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[39] Loomis and Green, "The Pattern of Mental Conflict in a Typical State University," p. 346. For a further study of these relationships, cf. William M. Smith, Jr., "Rating and Dating: a Re-Study," *Marriage and Family Living*, November 1952, XIV, 312-17.

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WINCH, ROBERT F., *The Modern Family*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1952. The appendix, "Rating, Dating, and College Fraternities," deals with the positive efforts made by fraternities on a coeducational campus to enhance their prestige through judicious dating by their members.

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COURTSHIP AND MARITAL CHOICE

The choice of a mate is the most important single decision the individual is called upon to make in our society. The emphasis upon happiness in marriage is so great that this choice overshadows any other, and the individual spends his adolescent years meeting scores of possible spouses. For one reason or another, he rejects (or is rejected by) each of these potential mates, until finally he falls in love with someone who falls in love with him. This is what both have been waiting for. This is the indispensable prerequisite for marriage. In previous chapters, we have considered some of the preliminaries of this process. We turn now to its culmination in the choice of a marriage partner.

The Nature of Marital Choice

The manner in which courtship takes place is, as we have indicated in chapter 7, heavily determined by the romantic complex. Among the romantic expectations is the convention that both parties will fall "desperately" in love and their mutual adoration will then be consummated in marriage. In this euphoric atmosphere, furthermore, the physical, mental, and moral characteristics of both individuals are expected to be so surcharged with emotion that each will assume traits visible only to the other. The plain girl becomes a beauty and the unattractive boy becomes a dashing figure during this period of "divine madness." Such temporary emotional aberrations are regarded with fond amusement in our society, in contrast to other societies where they are viewed as dangerous departures from the norm. We not only tolerate such behavior but expect it. Persons who do not act romantically during courtship are regarded with suspicion.

Courtship is thus an irrational process, depending upon the feelings of two persons who are expected to be temporarily above mere logic and sanity. Romantic love is an answer to a socially-conditioned need, whereby the individual reaches out for love in a compulsive search for security. In societies where the romantic complex is unknown, marriage is apparently not accompanied by a similar search for affection. The need for love as a prelude to marriage, therefore, is presumably a social product, reflecting the environment in which the individual is reared. It is no less compulsive, however, because it is an acquired need.[1]

The irrational elements in the choice of a mate are often complicated by the rational statements of the individuals concerned. Man is both a rational and an irrational animal, and his behavior is a mixture of these elements. When young women are asked to describe the qualities they desire in a possible mate, they will dutifully draw up a list of traits that show eminently reasonable judgment.[2] These rationalizations will be in accord with the predominantly middle-class culture of the nation.

But the *real* reasons why each of these young persons will ultimately marry a particular man are very different from any such rational enumeration. Among these hidden reasons are the desire to be dominated, to be erotically aroused, to be admired, to be sympathized with, to be protected, to be indulged, to be punished, and to be blamed. These needs are often buried deep within the personality, and in many cases the individual himself is not conscious of their existence. We fall in love with those who fill (or give promise of filling) some of these deep, psychic needs.[3]

This irrational process of marital choice is so completely a part of the culture that the average person rarely, if ever, questions either the premises that underlie it or the efficiency with which it operates. It is widely assumed that this is the best of all possible ways of choosing a mate and that any other way is unromantic, unsatisfactory, and even slightly unethical. It is pertinent, however, at least to question the ultimate efficiency of this process, even in terms of the individual happiness which is presumably its principal goal. The person whom one dates may not be the person with whom one can be happy during the long and prosaic relationships of marriage. The characteristics of a good date are not necessarily those of a good wife. The present system of dating and courtship, conducted under the influence of romantic love and compulsive emotional needs, therefore may not be the most efficient method of marital choice.

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[1] Esther Milner, "Effects of Sex Role and Social Status on the Early Adolescent Personality," *Genetic Psychology Monographs*, November 1949, XL, 231-325.

[2] Thomas C. McCormick and Boyd E. Macrory, "Group Values in Mate Selection in a Sample of College Girls," *Social Forces*, March 1944, XXII, 315-17.

[3] Robert F. Winch, *The Modern Family* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1952), pp. 408-9.

We shall repeatedly return to this general problem throughout our discussion, inasmuch as it constitutes a crucial aspect of courtship and marriage in American society. The continuing high divorce rate is the most obvious evidence that this form of marital choice leaves something to be desired, both in happiness and marital permanency. The value of individual choice is, however, so pervasive that it cannot be denied, even if one had the inclination and the power. The high incidence of marital impermanence is thus an inescapable cultural hazard inherent in the social value of individual choice. With all its irrationality, its compulsiveness, and its ultimate marital insecurity, individual choice is clearly a value that our society prizes highly. A well-known anthropologist comments that "in a culture built as ours is on ever expanding personal choice, an important goal of which is the pursuit of happiness, the right to terminate an unhappy marriage is the other side of the coin of which the fair side is the right to choose one's spouse." [4]

We may examine in more detail the nature of the "real" reasons whereby the individual is moved to choose one particular mate out of all the others. The following discussion of the ego-ideal and the parent-image as factors in marital choice is suggestive, rather than definitive, for these hypotheses have not as yet been demonstrated by extensive empirical investigation. Nevertheless, these concepts add to an understanding of marital choice by indicating the emotional needs which the individual is unconsciously seeking to satisfy.

The Role of the Ego-Ideal

We have considered briefly the role of the ego-ideal in romantic love and dating. The ego-ideal refers to the individual's conception of himself as he would "like" to be, in contrast to the way he "really" is.[5] The individual loves himself in somewhat the same way that he loves objects outside himself, and thereby transfers to himself some of the emotional energy (libido) that he feels toward other persons. In the course of his personality development, he comes to realize that there is a discrepancy between his ideal self and the self as it actually exists. This realization (which may be both conscious and subconscious) causes him unhappiness. The resultant feeling of inadequacy reaches its height at adolescence, when the contrast between the ego-ideal and the individual's conception of himself is often great. Romantic love overcomes much of this feeling of insecurity, as the shy and pimply boy and the awkward and gangling girl "fall in love" and thereby receive the assurance that someone loves them, no matter how unattractive they are.

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[4] Ruth Benedict, "The Family: Genus Americanum," *The Family: Its Function and Destiny*, ed. Ruth N. Anshen (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1949), p. 163.

[5] This discussion of the ego-ideal follows that of J. C. Flügel, *Man, Morals, and Society* (London: Duckworth, 1945), pp. 34-35.

We are often not content with ourselves as objects worthy of our own affection. We unconsciously try to make ourselves better and hence more worthy of love in our own eyes. The persons with whom we earliest identify ourselves are usually our parents, since they assume the qualities of ideal personages in infancy and childhood. As we grow older, we build other persons into our ego-ideal. These models range in familiarity from our best friends (whom we know well) to our favorite movie actors (whom we know only on the screen). When we feel that we are living up to the demands of our ego-ideal, we have a corresponding sense of well-being. When we feel that we are failing to measure up to this ideal image, we suffer from depression and diminution of our ego-feelings. When we fall in love, however, our self-feeling is enhanced and we feel that we may, after all, be worthy of our ego-ideal.

In marital choice, the process goes one step farther. When two people fall in love, they may be said to "exchange ego-ideals," and, in so doing, each bolsters the self-esteem of the other. As stated by Theodor Reik, "loving means exchanging the ego-ideal for an external object, for a person in whom are joined all the qualities that we once desired for ourselves." [6] The traits in the girl that attract the boy are those which seem to be lacking in himself—namely, goodness, purity, and compassion. The definition of sex as evil and unclean means that the adolescent views these desires in himself as unworthy of the ego-ideal which he has projected.

The girl who appears to embody these qualities of goodness and purity appeals to the ego-ideal of the boy because these are precisely the traits that he feels are lacking in himself. The boy, on the other hand, may seem to represent the qualities of decision and vigor which the girl believes she lacks in herself. Each person thus answers (or seems to answer) a need in the other, a need that originally grew out of the ideal the person had established for himself. As Benedek puts it, "One became a better and a worthier person through love—one came nearer and nearer to his own ego-ideal—thus through love, fear and insecurity disappear." [7]

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[6] Theodor Reik, *A Psychologist Looks at Love* (New York: Rinehart & Company, 1944), p. 59.

The feeling of happiness that follows the choice of a marital partner is an expression of satisfaction at being loved and thus being worthy of the ego-ideal. The one who is loved feels that he is a better person than he was before. He is grateful to the loved one for producing this pleasant sensation and for raising him more closely to his ego-ideal. There is considerable self-love in the process of loving another person, although the self-love takes a subconscious form. The exchange of ego-ideals causes each person to feel himself worthy of self-respect (love) and each accordingly is thankful to the other for reviving his (or her) own self-love.

The loved one is thus, in effect, a substitute for the ego-ideal of the other. When two lovers exchange their ego-ideals in this fashion, Reik suggests that the fact that "they love each other means that they love the ideal of themselves in the other one." [8] People feel the need of love because they cannot attain their ego-ideal and therefore realize the best in themselves without loving an object outside themselves. This process has little to do with "selfishness" as it is commonly understood. The individual instead directs his affection to someone else and, in return, receives the extra dividend of enhancing his self-confidence.

The Role of the Parent-Image

A second factor in the choice of a marital partner is the parent-image(s) inculcated in the individual during his early years in the parental family. The influence of the parents upon the child is very strong, coming as it does during the most impressionable period in life. It would seem to follow, therefore, that the experiences of the child with his parents would influence his subsequent emotional adjustment and, consequently, his courtship and marriage.[9] The images of the parents carry strong emotional overtones, which presumably influence both marital choice and married life. The choice of a spouse is, in part at least, an answer to emotional needs. The mother and father have been instrumental in establishing (or at least coloring) these needs. It follows that the parent-image will have some influence upon the crucial choice of a husband or wife.[10]

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[7] Therese Benedek, *Insight and Personality Adjustment* (New York: The Ronald Press, 1946), p. 25.

[8] Reik, *A Psychologist Looks at Love*, p. 62.

These influences are extremely complex. The emotional life of the infant and child in the family of orientation is by no means as simple as was formerly supposed. The parents of both sexes have different influences upon the child, especially with regard to his marital choice. It is not merely a question of the boy wishing to marry someone just like the girl who married dear old Dad. Neither are these parent-images based upon obvious physical resemblances, whereby the boy is drawn to the girl who resembles his mother as he remembers her when he was a child. The influences rather reflect the emotional experiences of the child of either sex in the parental family. The man may thus conceivably be drawn to a woman who will be *unlike* his mother if he suffered from real or imagined neglect and consciously or unconsciously hated her. The same situation may apply to the girl who feared her father and who may consequently be drawn to a man who is as different from her father as possible.

We cannot explore all of the complex emotional ramifications of the parent-image upon the choice of a mate. We can only state that resemblances exist between mates and parents that are greater than would be expected on the basis of chance alone. These resemblances seem to be largely temperamental, rather than physical, and suggest that the parent-image is based more completely upon emotional impressions than physical appearance. Among the temperamental traits that appear to be significant in this connection are whether or not the parent gets over anger easily, whether or not he is self-confident, and the nature and extent of his sense of duty. In short, the research findings in these relationships definitely "tie in with the general theory that parent-images influence one's marital choice." [11]

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[9] The work of Robert F. Winch has been significant in this connection. See Winch, "Further Data and Observations on the Oedipus Hypothesis: The Consequence of an Inadequate Hypothesis," *American Sociological Review*, December 1951, XVI, 784-95.

[10] Cf. Ernest W. Burgess and Leonard S. Cottrell, *Predicting Success or Failure in Marriage* (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1939), pp. 344-45.

We may briefly explore these relationships further, using documents secured from women. A different pattern would prevail for men. Some of the varied influences of the parent-image upon the choice of a husband were as follows:

a. Choice of mate resembling father.
b. Choice of mate influenced by a combined parent-substitute and mate-image.
c. Choice of mate influenced by ambivalent feelings toward mother and friendly feelings toward father.
d. Choice of mate influenced by violent reaction against father and friendly feelings toward mother.
e. Choice of mate influenced by satisfactory relationships with both parents.
f. Choice of mate influenced by reaction against both parents.[12]

This variety of parent-child relationships suggests that the situation is more complicated than the simple Oedipus and Electra hypotheses of Freud would indicate. It is not sufficient to state that the individual tends to be attracted to persons who resemble the parent of the opposite sex and that his marital choice is determined by this factor alone. Such influences are undoubtedly operative in a number of cases, but others are also present, which qualify the simple Freudian hypothesis. The relationships of the individual with *both* parents and the images he forms of them as a child are important in the choice of a mate. In our society, furthermore, the mother ordinarily exerts a stronger influence upon *both* the son and daughter than does the father. In the middle-class, urban family, the mother is in a central position to gratify the wants of the infant and the child. For that reason, boys and girls tend to look to their mothers to a greater extent than to their fathers for gratification.[13]

The Role of the Ideal Mate

A third factor in the choice of a mate is the image of the ideal husband or wife. This is *not* the same as the ego-ideal, which refers to the ideal picture the individual has of himself and embodies the qualities he would like to have. The ideal-image is a picture of an imaginary love-object, endowed with all the qualities which the individual would like to find in a mate. Some of the elements in the ideal-image are consciously formulated and expressed, whereas others remain in the subconscious. The ideal-image is a dynamic concept, changing as the individual matures and experiences different needs. Parental images are an important part of the ideal during the early years and may be retained throughout maturity. In general, however, the early images of the parent are supplemented by other factors as the individual approaches the time of marital choice.[14]

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[11] Anselm Strauss, "The Influence of Parent-Images upon Marital Choice," *American Sociological Review*, October 1946, XI, 554-59.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 558.

[13] Winch, "Further Data and Observations on the Oedipus Hypothesis: The Consequence of an Inadequate Hypothesis."

The image of the ideal mate is both an individual and a cultural product. It is an individual product in that it exists within the psyche of the boy or girl and incorporates the experiences each has had from earliest childhood. It is a cultural product in that many of its constituents are present in the culture and are experienced in this form. The patterns of ideal womanhood and manhood are important constituents of the ideal-image. In a folk society, these elements are handed on by word of mouth and by example, so that the adolescent sees older members of the opposite sex who assume ideal qualities for him. Still other aspects of this image are present in the folklore and are verbally handed down from generation to generation in this informal fashion.

These ideal elements are also present in the mass culture, which is becoming increasingly characteristic of our society. The mass culture has been defined as "a set of patterns of thought and action which are common to the subcultures of a heterogeneous society." [15] The agencies of dissemination of the mass culture include such varied devices as advertising, the radio, television, and the motion picture. The latter constitutes perhaps the most important source of ideal-images, inasmuch as the principal theme of the motion pictures is romantic love.

The heroes and heroines of the screen are the ideals for millions of impressionable adolescents, and their personalities become the models which the adolescents take as their ideal-images. These characterizations become stereotyped and one star may look and act very much like another. It has been suggested, however, that this very standardization assists in creating the ideal-image. The boy and girl can, as it were, "fill in" the traits in terms of their own particular needs. That is, the actual love-object may only superficially resemble the screen star in appearance, much less in actual "personality." The lover can, however, project his needs into the other and thereby have the illusion that his own particular beloved resembles his heroine of the screen.[16]

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[14] Willard Waller, *The Family*, rev. Reuben Hill (New York: The Dryden Press, 1951), pp. 198-99.

[15] John W. Bennett and Melvin M. Tumin, *Social Life: Structure and Function* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1948), p. 609.

A study of the characteristics of the ideal, as compared with the actual, mates of several hundred recently engaged and recently married women indicates the importance of the ideal factors in marital choice. Some 59.2 per cent of the girls indicated that the men to whom they were recently married or engaged came very close to the physical ideal which they (the girls) had previously established. In the field of personality, an even larger proportion (73.7 per cent) of the girls considered that their husbands or fiancés were either close to or identical with their ideal-image.[17]

The same study reported considerable variation in the degree to which the ideal-images were consciously formulated. Some girls indicated that they knew exactly how the expected spouse was supposed to look and act. Others indicated that their images were less concrete and were embodied in less definite "ideals" and "standards" of what a husband should be. In some instances, the girls indicated that they had consciously checked their potential mates against their ideal standards. Others were content happily to fall in love with the man whom they dimly divined as fulfilling some or all of the traits of their ideal husband. The ideal qualities in this study largely existed on the conscious and verbalized level. Other qualities exist on the subconscious level and influence the ideal image. However formed and formulated, the ideal-image seems to play an important role in the choice of a mate.[18]

Homogamy and Marital Choice

We have considered the general nature of marital choice and some of the emotional factors that influence it. We may now consider some of the factors that determine marital choice or, more strictly, that set certain limits within which it tends to take place. In our discussion of romantic love, we have perhaps overemphasized the fact that the choice of a mate is *theoretically* free and that any boy can presumably marry any girl he chooses—provided, of course, that she also chooses him.

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[16] Winch, *The Modern Family*, pp. 424-32.

[17] Strauss, "The Ideal and the Chosen Mate," *American Journal of Sociology*, November 1946, LII, 204-8.

[18] *Ibid.*

However free the choice of a mate may be in theory, there are practical limitations that restrict this freedom and narrow the limits within which the individual ordinarily marries. These limitations are not deliberate and conscious, nor do they arise primarily from the families of the young people, the elders of the village, or the formal sanctions of the state. The limitations are rather the spontaneous operation of certain forces which (with striking exceptions) do not plan to limit the choice of a partner but which, in effect, still do so.

Marital choice, as it operates in contemporary American society, involves the concept of *homogamy*. This term refers to the tendency to marry persons with similar or like characteristics, such as family background, religious affiliation, social attitudes, and social values.[19] This factor tends to limit marital choice, although in our society these limitations, as noted, are for the most part unpremeditated and are not part of a deliberate social policy. Some of these factors are in the mores, others are incorporated in the laws, and still others are the result of pure chance.

The process of marital choice thus has three related aspects: (a) the complete theoretical freedom to select a mate on the basis of romantic love; (b) the general limitations imposed by the culture, which set the bounds within which marital choice takes place; (c) the final act of choice which ordinarily occurs within these culturally prescribed limits, but which is still free as far as the *individual* object is concerned.[20] A middle-class Catholic boy is thus controlled by his culture to the extent that he tends to marry a Catholic girl from the same social setting. He is still free, however, to choose *which* girl he shall marry. We may consider these limitations on marital choice.

1. *Race*. For all practical purposes, one-tenth of the population of

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[19] Ernest W. Burgess and Paul Wallin, "Homogamy in Social Characteristics," *American Journal of Sociology*, September 1943, XLIX, 109-24.

Burgess and Wallin, "Homogamy in Personality Characteristics," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, October 1944, XXXIX, 475-81.

[20] August B. Hollingshead, "Cultural Factors in the Selection of Marriage Mates," *American Sociological Review*, October 1950, XV, 619-27.

the United States is effectively prevented from intermarriage with the remaining nine-tenths. More than thirty states have laws against the marriage of Negroes and whites. In the remaining states, the problem hardly exists because the mores so frown upon the crossing of racial lines in marriage that there is no need for legislation. A similar legal restriction is imposed on the intermarriage of whites and Mongoloids in many areas where this minority group is predominantly found.[21] Race, in short, "divides the community into two parts as far as marriage is concerned." [22]

2. *Religion.* The barrier of religious differences is not formalized in terms of law, but it exists nevertheless. Religion limits the range of marital choice and furthers the process of homogamy. In the area of doctrine, the battle for religious tolerance has long since been won in this country, but in the area of interpersonal relations it still exists. Members of the three great denominational groups—Protestants, Catholics, and Jews—tend to marry within their own group, and these differences clearly exercise a limiting influence upon the choice of a marital partner.

"Next to race," says Hollingshead, "religion is the most decisive factor in the segregation of males and females into categories that are approved or disapproved with respect to nuptiality." [23] In an extensive study of homogamy conducted in New Haven, Connecticut, he found that 97.1 per cent of the Jews, 93.8 per cent of the Catholics, and 74.4 per cent of the Protestants married within the same religious group. He also found that these percentages were almost the same in the parental generation as in the present generation, thus suggesting that, at least in this polyglot community, religious intermarriage is not increasing as it is said to be doing in other parts of the country.

The difference in percentages of Jews, Catholics, and Protestants marrying persons of the same faith may reflect the comparative strength of the mores making for religious homogamy. The Jewish culture thus presumably insists most strongly upon marriage within the same faith; the Catholic culture is only slightly less insistent; and the Protestant culture maintains the weakest sanctions of the three religious groups.[24]

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[21] The California law against racial intermarriage was declared unconstitutional by the State Supreme Court on October 1, 1948. Cf. Milton L. Barron, "Research on Intermarriage: A Survey of Accomplishments and Prospects," *American Journal of Sociology*, November 1951, LVII, 250.

[22] Hollingshead, *op. cit.*, p. 621.

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 622.

These general conclusions are, however, seriously questioned by a study of mixed (Catholic-Protestant) marriages in the United States as a whole. The rate of intermarriage in different sections of the country is influenced by three general factors: (a) the percentage of Catholics in the population; (b) the presence of strongly cohesive ethnic subgroups; and (c) the social and economic status of the Catholic population in the area.

With regard to a, the rate of intermarriage would obviously be low in areas where the Catholic population comprises only a small minority of the population. Where there are large and strong ethnic subgroups, the rate of intermarriage is lower than in those areas where there are no such groups. For example, in areas where there are strong ethnic groups of Irish, Polish, Mexican, or other Catholic subgroups, the individual tends to marry within his own ethnic group to a larger extent than he would if there were no such enclaves. Finally, the rate of intermarriage is also affected by the social status of the Catholic population in the area. If the Catholic group is predominantly on one socio-economic level, the rate of intermarriage will be high, whereas if the Catholic population is widely distributed among all levels, the rate of intermarriage will be lower. Catholics of all classes can thus find other Catholics within the same social level and are not so motivated to go outside their own social level (and religious faith) in search of a mate.[25]

The above generalizations are based upon mixed marriages involving Catholics in which Catholic nuptials are held. According to the Canon Law, only those mixed marriages held according to Catholic nuptials are valid and all others are invalid in the eyes of the Church.[26] There are, therefore, no data available on the number of mixed marriages *not* sanctioned by Catholic nuptials. Based upon the rate of *sanctioned* mixed marriages alone, intermarriage between Catholics and non-Catholics seems to be increasing throughout the United States, although there is a wide variation between different sections. On the basis of these admittedly incomplete data, it is estimated that, in the past two decades, "the mixed marriage rate of Catholics . . . has averaged thirty per cent of all Catholic marriages."[27] The role of organized religion in furthering homogamy thus may not be as strong as hitherto believed.[28]

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[24] Cf. also Ruby Jo Reeves Kennedy, "Single or Triple Melting Pot? Intermarriage Trends in New Haven, 1870–1940," *American Journal of Sociology*, January 1944, XLIX, 331-39.

[25] John L. Thomas, "The Factor of Religion in the Selection of Marriage Mates," *American Sociological Review*, August 1951, XVI, 487-91.

[26] Mixed marriages held according to Catholic nuptials are allowed by the Church only upon the signing of certain agreements by the non-Catholic concerning the education of the children in the Catholic faith. See "Marriage-Mixed," *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Encyclopedia Press, Inc., 1910).

3. *Ethnic Background.* A third factor promoting homogamy is ethnic background. It is natural that, other things being equal, boys and girls of Irish-American, Italian-American, or Swedish-American stock should intermarry, especially since religion is also operative here. Ethnic background appears to be considerably less important than religion, and many marriages cross ethnic lines but remain within religious bounds. In New Haven, Connecticut, for example, "The increasing intermarriage . . . is not general and indiscriminate but is channeled by religious barriers; and groups within the same religions tend to intermarry. Thus, Irish, Italians, and Poles marry mostly among themselves, and British-Americans, Germans and Scandinavians do likewise, while Jews seldom marry Gentiles."[29] The Catholic population of New Haven is becoming a mixture of the three large ethnic groups that profess the Catholic faith, whereas ethnic lines among Protestants are crossed even more frequently.[30]

In the nation as a whole, ethnic barriers appear to play a considerable, although declining, role in setting the limits of marital choice. Two decades ago, a study of 70,000 marriages in New York State (exclusive of New York City) disclosed that "one half, 48.7 per cent, of all the marriages were intermarriages in that they crossed either a nativity or a nationality line, or both. . . ."[31] A study made somewhat later indicated a considerable increase in intermarriage in New York State, with two-thirds of all foreign-born brides marrying grooms of native birth and three-fourths of foreign-born grooms marrying native brides.[32] The virtual cessation of large-scale immigration in recent decades has drastically reduced the number of foreign-born persons in the population, and ethnic differences between the later generations are being rapidly obliterated. Ethnic factors as such, therefore, will play a decreasing role in the limitation of marital choice.

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[27] Thomas, *ibid.*, p. 491.

[28] For a discussion of some of the consequences of mixed marriages, see Judson T. Landis, "Marriages of Mixed and Non-Mixed Religious Faith," *American Sociological Review*, June 1949, XIV, 401-7.

[29] Kennedy, "Single or Triple Melting Pot? Intermarriage Trends in New Haven, 1870–1940," p. 339.

[30] Hollingshead, "Cultural Factors in the Selection of Marriage Mates," pp. 623-25.

[31] James H. S. Bossard, "Nationality and Nativity as Factors in Marriage," *American Sociological Review*, December 1939, IV, 792-98.

4. *Social Class.* A fourth factor in the promotion of homogamy is the position of both parties in the socio-economic setting. The combination of these factors closely approximates the concept of social class, although that term is presumably alien to the egalitarian philosophy of American culture. On common-sense grounds alone, however, it would be assumed that men and women from the same social level would have a greater chance of coming together and marrying than those from different levels. This hypothesis has been indirectly confirmed by several investigations of marital choice in terms of "residential propinquity," in which persons living in close proximity to each other (measured in terms of city blocks) married with greater frequency than those who lived farther away.[33] Residential propinquity is itself a reflection of other racial, ethnic, and religious similarities, and homogamy in these respects is manifested in the various ecological areas of the urban community.

The local community may do more than passively provide residences within the limits of which persons tend to meet and marry. The residential area also plays an *active* role in this process, insofar as the personality of the individual is a function of the social relationships in which he participates. It has been suggested that "locality may tend not only to *select*, but also to *produce* persons who are similar in attitudes, behavior patterns, and probably other characteristics. Hence . . . propinquity may be considered a primary component in the process of mate selection."[34] Social class is a combination of the above factors, plus such economic considerations as occupation, income, and housing facilities.

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[32] Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, "Intermarriage Among National Groups Increasing," *Statistical Bulletin*, May 1946.

[33] James H. S. Bossard, "Residential Propinquity as a Factor in Marriage Selection," *American Journal of Sociology*, September 1932, XXXVIII, 219-24.

Ray H. Abrams, "Residential Propinquity as a Factor in Marriage Selection: Fifty Year Trends in Philadelphia," *American Sociological Review*, June 1943, VIII, 288-94.

A study was made of class factors in marital choice on a national scale, in which a representative cross-section of the adult, married, male population was queried as to their occupation and that of the wife's father. The assumption was that the social class of the husband could be roughly determined from his own occupation and the class of the wife from the occupation of her father. In general, this study confirmed the hypothesis of class homogamy, in that the men tended to marry women whose fathers occupied the same general occupational level as themselves. The different occupational strata in the study were "business executive, professional, small business, white-collar, skilled manual, semiskilled, and unskilled." In the majority of instances where the marriage crossed one occupational line, say from small business to white-collar, the difference was limited to one level, and hence the majority of husbands and wives in the sample were of the same or very similar social background. The marriage of a wealthy girl to her father's chauffeur may be an important symbol of the romantic folklore, but it appears to be rare in actual practice.[35]

In New Haven, Hollingshead found that the class factor was also very strong in homogamy. This factor operates within religious and ethnic groups and further stratifies these larger divisions into still smaller areas within which the individual seeks a mate. The criteria of class membership in this study were residence and education, and each was found to erect its own *further* barriers against intermarriage and thereby increase the tendency of like to marry like. Within each religious group, for example, men tended to marry women with a comparable amount of formal education, a tendency that was most marked in the Jewish group and least so in the Catholic group. These tendencies operated over two generations, and the parents showed the same class and educational similarities as the children, with the factor of religion held constant. In other words, for two generations the Jewish groups had married spouses with comparable educational attainment to a greater extent than the Catholic groups. As measured by such factors as residence and education, therefore, the class distinctions hold from one generation to the next in marital choice.[36]

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[34] Alfred C. Clarke, "An Examination of the Operation of Residential Propinquity as a Factor in Mate Selection," *American Sociological Review*, February 1952, XVII, 17-22.

[35] Richard Centers, "Marital Selection and Occupational Strata," *American Journal of Sociology*, May 1949, LIV, 530-35.

5. *Age.* Age is another factor in homogamy. The majority of persons marry within certain age limits, thereby further restricting the field of marital choice. This is especially true when the individual marries for the first time. The folkways of our society define the correct age relationship as one in which the husband is approximately three years older than the wife. In practice, therefore, the marital choice of males tends to be limited to females who are their own age or a few years younger. Conversely, females marry men their own age or a few years older.[37]

These relationships have been established on a national scale by a study conducted by the Bureau of the Census. In this study, approximately one-half of all men who were still married to their first wives had married during the 6-year span from 22 to 28 years of age. For the women, age at first marriage was even more narrowly restricted, with one-half of those still in their first marriage having married in the 5-year span from 19 to 24 years. The median age at first marriage for the men who were still married to their first wives was 24.2 years. The median age for the women under corresponding circumstances was 20.9 years. Contrary to popular belief, the median age at first marriage has been steadily declining since 1890, when the figure stood at 26.1 years for the male and 22.0 years for the female.[38]

Many of the readers of this book are students in co-educational colleges and universities, where they are having dates with their fellow students. The chances of marrying men from the same institution, however, are less than 50-50 for the average coed. Furthermore, those girls who do marry men from the same institution will probably marry those from a class that graduated a few years before.[39] This age differential is understandable when we realize that the average girl who graduates from college is ready for marriage. The average man, on the other hand, either has several years of postgraduate training or an equal period to establish himself in business before he feels financially able to marry. Hence college men tend to marry girls somewhat younger than themselves and college girls tend to do the opposite. Age and educational opportunity combine further to restrict free and unlimited marital choice.

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[36] Hollingshead, "Cultural Factors in the Selection of Marriage Mates," Table 6.

Cf. also Julius Roth and Robert F. Peck, "Social Class and Social Mobility Factors Related to Marital Adjustment," *American Sociological Review*, August 1951, XVI, 478-87.

[37] Hollingshead, "Age Relationships and Marriage," *American Sociological Review*, August 1951, XVI, 492-99.

[38] Paul C. Glick and Emanuel Landau, "Age as a Factor in Marriage," *American Sociological Review*, August 1950, XV, 517-29.

[39] Herbert D. Lamson, "Marriage of Coeds to Fellow Students," *Marriage and Family Living*, May 1946, VIII, 27-28.

6. *Social Attitudes.* A final aspect of homogamy may be summarized under the heading of "social attitudes." These elements emerged from a study of 1,000 engaged couples living in the Chicago metropolitan region and supplement the forms of homogamy discussed above.[40] In addition to similarities between engaged couples in ethnic background, religious affiliation, and social status of parents, similarities in social attitudes were found regarding leisure-time activities, friendship with members of the opposite sex, employment of the wife, and marriage and divorce. These social attitudes may be summarized as follows.

a. *Social Participation.* This group of social attitudes includes factors such as: "(a) their friendships with persons of the same and opposite sex, (b) their participation in organizations, (c) their leisure-time activities, and (d) their drinking and smoking habits." [41] In some of these characteristics (participation in organizations), homogamy is only slightly greater than chance, whereas in others (drinking and smoking habits) there is a strong correlation between the attitudes of the engaged couple.

b. *Courtship Behavior.* There was also a strong degree of homogamy in the attitudes of each party toward members of the opposite sex, with persons of considerable experience attracting those with similar backgrounds. Males with little or no previous experience in dating and courtship attracted females with corresponding lack of experience. In the degree of social sophistication, as might be expected, like tends to attract like in marital choice.

c. *Attitudes toward Marriage.* The third group of factors included a variety of attitudes dealing with marriage itself. Included in this group were attitudes toward love and romance; divorce and the circumstances when, if ever, it is justified; relationships between husband and wife; the gainful employment of the wife after marriage; contraception and the spacing of births; and the number of children desired. In summarizing these and other attitudes toward marriage, Burgess and Wallin admit that the association leading to the engagement may be partially related to the similarity between the engaged couple. In terms of like initially attracting like, however, they state that "It is also reasonable to assume that . . . those with similar conceptions tend to meet and fall in love with each other." [42]

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[40] Burgess and Wallin, "Homogamy in Social Characteristics," *American Journal of Sociology*, September 1943, XLIX, 117.

[41] *Ibid.*

In this chapter, we have been concerned with courtship and marital choice. We have indicated that marital choice is strongly conditioned by the romantic complex and that it is an irrational and often compulsive affair. The individual is often moved by emotional needs that reflect the ego-ideal, the parent-image, and the image of the ideal mate. These factors operate on both the conscious and the unconscious levels, so that the person is not always aware of the emotional needs which he attempts to meet in choosing a mate. After indicating the nature of marital choice, we then outlined some of the broad limits within which it may occur. Although the individual is in theory free to choose anyone he wishes in marriage, in practice he is restricted by factors that tend to bring about the marriage of like with like. These factors include race, religion, ethnic origin, social class, age, and social attitudes.

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[42] *Ibid.*, p. 123.

Hollingshead, August B., "Cultural Factors in the Selection of Marriage Mates," *American Sociological Review*, October 1950, XV, 619-27. An outline of the general and specific cultural factors that combine to limit the choice of a marital partner in a society theoretically based upon unlimited choice. The field of marital choice is heavily circumscribed by a variety of cultural factors, although the individual *does* have the power of ultimately choosing a certain person.

Kuhn, Manford H., "How Mates Are Sorted," *Family, Marriage, and Parenthood*, eds. Howard Becker and Reuben Hill, chap. 8. Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1948. This chapter contains an excellent survey of the literature on marital choice and the encouragements and limitations thereto.

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PART III

THE RELATIONSHIPS OF MARRIAGE

10

SOCIAL ROLES AND MARITAL INTERACTION

Marriage is a social relationship, conducted by two socialized human beings in a setting of reciprocal social expectations. These expectations place certain obligations upon the husband and wife, which each does his best to fulfill. These obligations vary from one society to another and between social classes (or subcultures) within the same society. The social expectations connected with marriage and the family comprise an important segment of culture, and their similarities assure a considerable degree of uniformity. Husbands and wives who follow the expectations of American culture have a different pattern of marital relationships from those who follow the expectations of other cultures. We are concerned here primarily with marriage and the family in American culture. The subsequent discussion of marital and familial roles will be integrated with this cultural context.

The Nature of Social Roles

The part each member of the family plays in the family drama is largely a reflection of the culture. The composite of these parts is known as the social role of the husband, wife, father, mother, son, daughter, and the rest of the members of the family.[1] The social role has been defined as "the organization of habits and attitudes of the individual appropriate to a given position in a system of social relationships."[2] The system of social relationships is first marriage and then the family, in the order of increasing complexity.

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[1] For a recent analysis of the concept of social role, see Lionel J. Neiman and James W. Hughes, "The Problem of the Concept of Role—A Re-Survey of the Literature," *Social Forces*, December 1951, XXX, 141-49.

[2] Leonard S. Cottrell, Jr., "Roles and Marital Adjustment," *Publication of the American Sociological Society*, 1933, XXVII, 107-15.

The social role is also a *reciprocal* pattern, involving the behavior of a person occupying a given position (status) and the behavior which he expects toward himself from others. The reciprocal quality of the social role is indicated in its definition as "an internally consistent series of conditioned responses by one member of a social situation which represents the stimulus pattern for a similarly internally consistent series of conditioned responses of the other(s) in that situation." [3]

Marital roles thus refer to the expected relationships of each person to the other members of the family group, plus the feelings of pride, happiness, self-satisfaction, inadequacy, frustration, and any other reaction or combination thereof which the individual derives from his accompanying sense of success or failure. Marital roles carry strong emotional connotations, and the individual learns during the socialization process to associate his or her ego with the role of husband or wife as defined in our society. Every society has its conception of "the good husband" and "the good wife," which comprises the pattern of roles each is expected to play. These roles are established in the mores and are inculcated into the emergent personality through this means.[4]

Social roles are an important element in personality. They are often learned before the individual has developed any independent judgment, and hence are accepted uncritically. The child learns the rudiments of the marital role from his own family of orientation. His conceptions of the good husband and the good wife are often partially derived from observing his own parents. If these relationships are pleasant, his conception of the adult role may be similar to those he has observed. If his parental relationships are unpleasant, he may revolt against the role behavior which he has observed and may consciously or unconsciously seek other roles in his own marriage. Whether positively or negatively, the role behavior which the individual observes in the home forms an important part of his personality.

Social roles serve as a motivation for behavior in the sense that the individual acts out his role patterns when confronted by the appropriate situation. He enters marriage with certain strong preconceptions as to what his behavior should be and what the behavior of his wife should be toward him. He attempts to fulfill his conception of the role of a good husband and he likewise expects his wife to act in a manner which he considers appropriate. Social roles are therefore far from being bloodless abstractions or theoretical analyses. They are dynamic in the most literal sense, for they act as continuing stimuli to actual behavior. They have strong powers of propulsion, in that they lay claims upon the individual in a particular situation (marriage). He in turn is compelled to act in accordance with the appropriate roles, or at least his conception of them.[5]

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[3] Cottrell, "The Adjustment of the Individual to his Age and Sex Roles," *American Sociological Review*, October 1942, VII, 617.

[4] Katharine Dupré Lumpkin, *The Family: a Study of Member Roles*, page 3. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1933.

When the couple is married, the members immediately begin to function in their new cultural roles as husbands and wives. The manner in which each individual functions in his new role reflects such factors as "his own preformed role-concepts, his own expectations regarding the reciprocal roles of his mate, his mate's expectations regarding him, and the degree of correspondence between the two sets of role-concepts and expectations. . . ." [6] The success of the marital relationship will depend upon the adequacy with which each plays his role as expected both by himself and his spouse. The happiness of the spouses will be a function of their enjoyment of their roles and the adequacy with which they fulfill them. In this sense also, marriage is a social (or shared) relationship.

The interaction between husband and wife in marriage is determined partially by the prevailing marital roles, plus their interpretation by the individuals concerned. The spouses may think that marriage is exclusively an individual adventure. In a sense it is, but it is a social adventure as well, in which the participants attempt to act out certain prescribed parts as best they can in a dynamic situation. Many of the behavior patterns in marriage are embodied in the culture and the individuals attempt to apply these patterns to their own situations. Each spouse has economic roles, conjugal roles, affectional roles, and other clusters of expectations that motivate his conduct in the appropriate situations. Individual variations are present in each marital drama, but the general tone is set by the culturally approved roles.

These patterned forms of social behavior tend to simplify the relationship by providing an accepted web of responses to many of the recurrent situations arising in marriage. The husband and wife do not need to work out their own adjustments every time, for many of the mutual responses are already established in their personalities. There is, of course, an inevitable period of trial and error for the newly-weds, and complete adjustment is often delayed for months or years if, indeed, it is ever accomplished.[7]

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[5] Willard Waller, *The Family*, rev. Reuben Hill (New York: The Dryden Press, 1951), pp. 85-87.

[6] Leland H. Stott, "The Problem of Evaluating Family Success," *Marriage and Family Living*, Fall 1951, XIII, 151.

Nevertheless, the individual knows *in general* what to expect in marriage, although even here the validity of these anticipations depends upon the dynamic quality of the society. That is, societies where change is at a minimum maintain the social roles fairly unchanged from generation to generation, whereas in societies where change is at a maximum behavior changes faster than the roles that define it. Social roles, however, provide considerable unity and consistency to any society, no matter how dynamic. Without these patterns, each individual would have to improvise much of his behavior in marriage, which would render this relationship even more complex than it actually is.

The Foundations of Marital Roles

The role of the individual as defined in childhood has unusual persistence. The family of orientation is the first group that presents a series of expectations to which the person is conditioned. As the child matures, these early expectations are modified by participation in other primary groups and later in many secondary groups. By the time the individual is ready to assume full adult responsibilities, it is assumed that he is a relatively mature and independent person. In these terms, immaturity means simply that the individual has carried into adult life an unduly large proportion of parental-family definitions, expectations, and roles. Even with those who have achieved normal maturity, however, childhood impressions still play an important part in the personality. These infantile roles are ordinarily more important on the subconscious than the conscious level, and the adult may not be consciously aware of the extent to which his early roles still affect his personality.

In many cases, the roles assumed in the parental family may persist virtually without modification in the adult personality. In such instances, the infantile roles may interfere with the proper performance of the adult role in the family of procreation. The adult male may literally obey his father as long as the latter is still alive. After his father is dead, the son may act, as nearly as possible, as he believes his father would like him to act. He thereby remains, for all practical purposes, a child in many respects because he is unable to make the decisions expected of a person with adult status. Others carry their childhood roles of spoiled children all through their lives. In so doing, they present difficult problems for their wives, who assume that their husbands are adults and have emancipated themselves from childish things.[8]

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[7] Cf. Judson T. Landis, "Length of Time Required to Achieve Adjustment in Marriage," *American Sociological Review*, December 1946, XI, 666-77.

Conceptions of marital roles are initially established in the family of orientation. These conceptions are subsequently modified by other cultural influences, but they are founded in the parental family. Persons with different social backgrounds therefore differ in their role conceptions. We shall consider this factor in some detail later, but it is important to note here the existence of these status differences.[9] Among the cultural differences that affect marital role conceptions are those between occupational, racial, ethnic, and educational groups. The expectations common to the parental family are incorporated naturally into the personality of the child. These expectations may persist without serious question for life, provided there is no interruption in the expected role performance. Many such interruptions presumably do not occur if the individual marries on the same social level. If the spouses represent two different sets of role patterns, however, they may have to re-examine their role conceptions.[10]

One type of role pattern that is established in the family of orientation and transmitted to the family of procreation is that involving authority. The American family has several patterns of authority, rather than one predominant pattern such as is found in more homogeneous societies. Some families are in effect controlled by the mother, others by the father, and still others are jointly controlled, with decisions based upon agreement between the spouses. The individual tends to receive his definition of the authority role from his own experience in the family. When he forms his own family and becomes in turn a parent, he often incorporates the authority patterns of his parents. He thereby acts out the parental role in somewhat the same way as he

[8] Waller, *The Family*, p. 87.

[9] Annabelle B. Motz, "Conceptions of Marital Roles by Status Groups," *Marriage and Family Living*, Fall 1950, XII, 136.

[10] Carson McGuire, "Social Stratification and Mobility Patterns," *American Sociological Review*, April 1950, XV, 195-204.

originally perceived it.[11] In other words, "The self-other patterns pertaining to authority (the authority roles) which he incorporated from response to an observation of family authority tend to persist, and to be projected into his marriage relation." [12]

These acquired patterns influence the expectations of the husband toward his wife and children. The wife likewise enters the marriage with a set of authority patterns reflecting her own family of orientation. These expectations may be complementary, in which event marital adjustment is simplified. These expectations may be conflicting, and the spouses must then work out accommodations if their marriage is going to function smoothly. Many emotionally insecure persons are unable to modify their authority patterns and may attempt to force them on their spouses, even though this process may produce frustration and conflict. Persons who are emotionally secure are more independent of their earlier patterns. They are capable of making adjustments by altering their own roles to fit the new marital situation. Emotional maturity reflects the degree to which the individual can play the role of the other and modify his patterns of authority.[13]

Homogamy (marriage of like with like) and heterogamy (the opposite) are both observable in the case of the authority patterns. Homogamous patterns are those in which: (a) both persons grew up in mother-controlled families, (b) both persons grew up in father-controlled families, and (c) both persons grew up in families in which parental control was balanced. Such marriages tend to reproduce similar patterns in the family of procreation, and the husband and wife play the appropriate roles.

Where both parties grew up in a mother-controlled family, for example, the daughter was initially prepared to play the dominant wife-and-mother role in her own family. The daughter then tends to expect the same role behavior in her husband as she observed in her father. A daughter reared in such a family environment thus unconsciously seeks (and often finds) a husband who seeks (and likewise often finds) a dominant woman for his wife. Under such conditions, the role expectations are complementary and marital adjustment is thereby facilitated. Both spouses are expecting the same relationships of authority in marriage, and each plays the appropriate role therein.[14]

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[11] Cottrell, "The Analysis of Situational Fields in Social Psychology," *American Sociological Review*, June 1942, VII, 370-82.

[12] Hazel L. Ingersoll, "A Study of the Transmission of Authority Patterns in the Family," *Genetic Psychology Monographs*, 1948, XXXVIII, 225-302.

[13] *Ibid.*, pp. 231-32.

Families characterized by heterogamy were those in which the wife has been reared in one form of family and the husband in another. Under these conditions, some adjustment of role expectations is clearly necessary, for the marriage would otherwise be characterized by conflict and frustration. We cannot consider all of the possible combinations of role expectations and behavior, but may merely call attention to a typical conflict situation, in which the husband grows up under a strong and patriarchal father, and the wife is reared by a strong and matriarchal mother. The husband presumably enters marriage expecting to play the authoritarian role and expecting his wife to be submissive. The wife brings her own conception of a strongly *maternal* role, in which she is the dominant figure and expects appropriate behavior from her husband. In the marital relationship, each must modify his expectations, possibly toward a greater equalitarianism. Each spouse thereby relinquishes some of the authority he has brought to the marriage, and in so doing changes the role of the other. Without some such compromise, marital conflict is a strong possibility.[15]

Social Change and Marital Roles

Marital roles are primarily ascribed, rather than achieved, patterns of behavior. This distinction between ascribed and achieved status and role is familiar to students of culture and personality and refers to the fact that some positions in society are granted (ascribed) by virtue of age, sex, social position, marital status, and the like. Other positions must be earned (achieved) by individual activity. In the latter category are achievements in the fields of wealth, skill, learning, and other forms of attainment.[16] The status of husband or wife and the role that goes with it are among the behavior patterns that are socially ascribed, together with the rights and duties pertaining thereto. The roles are present in the culture and the individual adjusts to them as best he can.

The ascription of marital roles does not guarantee their consistency and compatibility. In a stable and integrated society, the roles of husband and wife are consistent both with each other and with the larger structure. This means that the expected behavior of the husband complements that of the wife, and each spouse has his or her duties and responsibilities clearly established. In a stable society, furthermore, the husband and wife are not expected to do things which they cannot possibly do, no matter how much they may want to. Under such conditions, the behavior which the husband can actually perform is approximately the same as he is expected to perform. In a stable society, for example, most husbands can perform their central role as breadwinner because the society insures the continuity of employment.

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[14] *Ibid.*, pp. 243-44.

[15] *Ibid.*, pp. 256-58.

[16] Ralph Linton, *The Cultural Background of Personality* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1945), pp. 76-77.

In a dynamic and unstable society, however, behavior loses its consistency, and the individual finds himself doing things he is not supposed to do according to his marital role. He also finds himself unable to fulfill some of the expectations of his role, no matter how hard he may try. Wives find it difficult to be satisfied as housekeepers when they have nothing to keep but a small apartment. Families with limited means hesitate to have several children in a society where a child is an economic liability. In these and many other respects, the individual is unable to play his role as it has been traditionally conceived, because many of the elements of the role are no longer consistent with the society as it presently exists.

This disparity between marital behavior and its definition reflects the process of social change. In a dynamic society, the various aspects of culture tend to change at different rates of speed. The material culture ordinarily changes more rapidly than the nonmaterial, thereby leaving the latter behind. Behavior is partially a reaction to various elements in the environment, such as new ways of making a living, new forms of transportation, and new conditions of living. In order to adjust to these modifications in his social milieu, the individual must change his behavior. At the same time, however, the definitions of behavior change more slowly, and the result is a situation of "cultural lag." [17] In the present context, the marital roles fall in the category of nonmaterial culture, are firmly imbedded in the personality, and hence change more slowly than the actual forms of behavior. This disparity in the rate of change between behavior and roles accounts for much of the confusion in contemporary marriage.

Many husbands and wives are behaving in a fashion that is contrary to their traditional roles. The roles were originally established in a simpler and more static society, where behavior changed very slowly from one generation to the next. The things people did and the things they were supposed to do were very closely correlated, and the average husband and wife were able to fulfill their roles with little difficulty. Such a situation is very reassuring, for the individual has the pleasant assurance that, no matter what his social status, he is at least acceptably performing his central marital role.

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[17] The classic statement of this hypothesis is given in William F. Ogburn, *Social Change*, rev. ed. (New York: The Viking Press, 1950).

The physical demands upon the wife, for example, were much greater in an earlier generation than they are in the contemporary urban, middle-class family. Nevertheless, the woman of an earlier generation had the satisfaction of knowing that, despite the physical hazards of childbirth and the backbreaking work of the farm, she was performing her marital role according to specifications. Many wives have no such assurance today. Their behavior has changed more rapidly than the expectations connected with their role.[18]

In a simple, agrarian society, the role of the wife is well defined. The same cannot be said of an industrial, urban society. During the early years of marriage and later in times of economic stress, the modern wife may contribute to the family income by gainful employment. Depending upon the social level and the nature of her husband's work, she may also have the important role of hostess at social functions. She is also expected to be a companion to her husband at all times, in which capacity she may run the gamut from sexual partner to practical nurse. In addition to these other role patterns, the middle-class urban wife not only bears the children but assumes the major responsibility for their early care. Finally, she is the household manager and general purchasing agent, which functions require their own skills. This pattern of role expectations of the wife is the most complex that any family system has ever seen. The possibilities of failure are greatly enhanced by this complexity.

The problem of the husband is not nearly so acute. His role changes have been neither as extensive nor intensive as those of the wife. His role expectations remain strongly oriented toward earning an "adequate" living, and his success in his marital role is largely judged in these terms. The "good husband" is popularly considered as virtually synonymous with the "good provider." In a recent nation-wide survey, a representative sample of married women were queried as to the quality they considered most important in a husband. Almost half (42 per cent) of this sample stated that being a "good provider" was the most important single criterion of a husband, thereby indicating that this role is still strong in the culture.[19] Other male roles (that is, father) are presumably not so important in our society, since it is tacitly recognized that the major part in the care and training of the child is played by the wife and mother.

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[18] Ferdinand Lundberg and Marynia F. Farnham, *Modern Woman: The Lost Sex?* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1947).

Social change has another differential effect upon the roles of the husband and wife. Under conditions of an earlier society, the behavior of both the husband and wife continued very much the same after marriage, and both members carried on many of the same economic functions they had performed in their family of orientation. The arrival of children obviously changed many of these relationships, especially for the wife, but her major functions continued to be those of homemaker. Such a continuity of role [20] is still apparent in the farm family, where both husband and wife carry on their activities in and about the home both before and after marriage.

In the urban family, however, the differential effect of role change is more apparent. The husband, it is true, is expected to continue in very much the same fashion after marriage as before. The wife, however, has many adaptations to make. Marriage represents a far greater change in role behavior for her than for her husband. Even where the wife has been working for wages and continues to do so, she must perforce make an abrupt transition to the roles of homemaker, cook, companion, hostess, and prospective mother. Discontinuities in role behavior after marriage are thus more sudden and complete for the wife than for the husband.

Social Factors in Role Variation

We have heretofore considered marital roles in general terms, as though they existed in similar form throughout the society as a whole. We have, to be sure, suggested that variations exist between rural and urban families, but these differences have also been stated in general terms. We may now examine the role patterns in more detail, with special reference to the factors that bring about variations therein. Within the pattern of American culture, there are many subcultures with differing social expectations regarding marriage. We may explore some of these social factors, with particular reference to the differences in marital roles.

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[19] Mildred Strunk, ed., "The Quarter's Polls," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Summer 1948, XII, 357-58.

[20] Ruth Benedict, "Continuities and Discontinuities in Cultural Conditioning," *Psychiatry*, May 1938, I, 161-67.

1. *Social Class.* The first of these subcultural factors is social class. A social class is a large and relatively permanent group of people of all ages and both sexes who occupy a common social status. This status is, for the most part, ascribed, but it is possible to achieve a status other than that received at birth. A class society may be defined as "one in which the hierarchy of prestige and status is divisible into groups each with its own social, economic, attitudinal and cultural characteristics and each having differential degrees of power in community decisions." [21] We are primarily concerned with the cultural connotations of this definition and will accordingly view social classes in terms of their cultural differences.

There is a strong tendency in American society to regard class differences largely in financial terms. Other cultural differences, however, distinguish one subculture from another and influence marital roles. One such set of differences comprises the patterns of child training. In matters such as feeding, weaning, bladder-training, father-child roles, degree of responsibility, and relative strictness of discipline, the average middle-class family differs sharply from the average working-class family.

In the middle class, children are taught to be hungry on schedule, whereas working-class children are fed when they are hungry. Middle-class fathers spend more time with their children than do working-class fathers. The paternal role also differs in the amount of time spent on informal education of the child, with the middle-class father more active in this respect. The middle-class child is ordinarily subject to stricter discipline than his contemporary in the working-class family.[22] These and other patterns unquestionably influence the conceptions of the marital role in the different subcultures.

One of the most spectacular class differences between marital roles is apparent in the field of affection. As we have indicated in chapter 7, romantic love is more characteristic of the middle and upper classes than it is of the lower classes. Working-class males are primarily concerned with complete libidinal satisfaction in the form of sexual intercourse, whereas middle-class males sublimate their sexual impulses with a combination of romantic love and petting.

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[21] Walter Goldschmidt, "Social Class in America—A Critical Review," *American Anthropologist*, October-December 1950, LII, 492.

[22] Allison Davis and Robert J. Havighurst, "Social Class and Color Differences in Child-Rearing," *American Sociological Review*, December 1946, XI, 698-710.

The different social levels (to use Kinsey's term) thus tend to differ widely in the sexual role of the male (and, by implication, the female) before marriage. The social levels also show a considerable role difference in marriage itself. Lower-level males apparently continue their premarital behavior for the first few years of marriage by engaging in frequent extra-marital relationships. This behavior decreases as they get older and become more strictly monogamous. In the middle and upper levels, the situation appears to be reversed. Here the male is sexually faithful during the early years of marriage, thereby also continuing the premarital pattern. As he grows older, the middle-class husband increasingly seeks sexual satisfaction outside of marriage.[23]

2. *Occupation.* A second cultural factor that brings about differences in marital roles is occupation. This factor, of course, is closely related to social class, inasmuch as the father's occupation is one of the most important features of class ascription. Commenting upon the importance of the male occupational status, Parsons indicates that "more than any other single factor, it determines the status of the family in the social structure, directly because of the symbolic significance of the office or occupation as a symbol of prestige, indirectly because as the principal source of family income it determines the standard of living of the family." [24]

The roles of both husband and wife are different for the business executive and the unskilled laborer, the corporation lawyer and the farmer, the college professor and the factory worker. In each of these occupational groups, the wife is expected to play a definite part in the activities of the home and hence in the success of her husband. The methods whereby she achieves this general goal, however, vary widely between occupational groups. The role of the farmer's wife still centers more completely in the traditional functions than does that of the upper-middle-class urban wife. The latter is often more concerned with the role of companion to her husband and hostess to his friends and business associates than with the mechanics of keeping house. The role of the upper-class urban wife is directed toward manipulating *people* (entertaining) and *symbols* (conversation), whereas that of the farm wife is more concerned with manipulating *things* by baking, sewing, mending, cleaning, and the rest of the traditional functions.

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[23] Alfred C. Kinsey *et al.*, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Company, 1948), chap. 10, "Social Level and Sexual Outlet."

[24] Talcott Parsons, "Age and Sex in the Social Structure of the United States," *American Sociological Review*, October 1942, VII, 609.

3. *Unemployment of the Husband.* A third social factor that produces variations in marital roles is the employment status of the husband. This is presumably a factor that, by its very nature, is more transitory than any of the others. That is, most husbands are not permanently unemployed, in the same sense that they permanently occupy a given class, occupational group, or ethnic group. Nevertheless, the effect of prolonged unemployment upon the principal marital roles may be difficult and even catastrophic. During the great depression of the 1930's, millions of men were, for extended periods, unable to perform the central role of breadwinner. Even under conditions of virtually full employment, there are several million unemployed persons, who suffer an impairment in the major marital role of the husband.[25]

Unemployment brings about a change in the role behavior of both husband and wife. The wife may be forced to accept whatever employment she can find in order to support the family during the unemployment of the husband. She may, in addition, be forced to introduce domestic economies and accept a temporary decline in status. In many respects, however, the wife carries on much as before. Her behavior continues to correspond fairly closely to her major role, that of wife and homemaker, which activities she must somehow continue to perform whether the husband works or not.

For the husband, however, there is a complete change of behavior and a corresponding departure from his marital role. He spends his days in the home or in a fruitless search for work, and in neither case is he able to augment the family income. His job is the center of his life in a very real sense, and he suffers a drastic ego-impairment if he cannot carry out this expected behavior. His failure to find work appears to be a sign of his incapacity as a man, although in the great majority of cases the impersonal causes of unemployment are paramount. Millions of men are out of work through no conceivable fault of their own. The role-failure, however, seems all too apparent.[26]

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[25] Ruth Shonle Cavan and Katherine Howland Ranck, *The Family and the Depression* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938), chap. V, "Disorganization as a Result of the Depression."

4. *Employment of the Wife.* The employment of the wife is a further factor producing variations in marital roles. Under these conditions, a considerable modification in the traditional patriarchal roles is almost inevitable. It is difficult for the husband to play the role of lord, master, and sole provider when the wife is gainfully employed and may be bringing in almost as much income as he. The scope of this change in role is very wide. In 1890, only 4.6 per cent of all married women were gainfully employed outside the home. In 1940, this percentage had increased to 15.2.[27] World War II saw a still greater percentage of wives gainfully employed, and this number continued at a high rate during the subsequent years of full employment. In April, 1951, an unprecedented 26.7 per cent of all married women living with their husbands were in the labor force. In absolute numbers, this represented some 10,182,000 working wives.[28]

In chapter 5, where we discussed the growing equalitarianism of the family, we considered some of the implications of the gainful employment of married women. We shall consider, in chapter 16, still other implications of this shift in economic role in connection with the changing economic functions of the family. We may merely note here that this modification in the role of the wife has been received with mixed emotions. Many wives are *consciously* gratified to play a more independent economic role and take their places with their husbands in making a living. Many others are not completely at ease in their new role, especially on the subconscious level. The traditional role of the wife as mother and homemaker still plays an important part in the expectations of our society. Many women who violate these role expectations, whatever their conscious motives for so doing, experience a certain measure of insecurity.[29]

The role of the gainfully employed wife thus entails psychic, as well as physical, complications. The wife who works a full day outside the home and attempts to act as homemaker at the same time is expending a great deal of nervous, as well as physical, energy. The working wife is obviously unable to spend as much time in the home as the nonworking wife, and the husband who expects the old-fashioned domestic virtues is often disappointed. The affectional role may also be complicated by the employment of the wife, as the latter may be unable to fill the emotional needs which the husband has been taught to expect. The husband who thinks of his wife as a companion for his leisure hours may find that she is too tired from her own exhausting day in the store or at the office to fulfill his expectations. In these and many other ways, the employment status of the wife modifies many of the traditional role expectations.[30]

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[26] *Ibid.*

[27] Bureau of the Census, Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940, Population, Vol. III, *The Labor Force*, Part I, Washington, 1943.

[28] Bureau of the Census, "Marital Status of Women in the Labor Force: April, 1951," *Current Population Reports: Labor Force*, Series P-50, No. 37, December 26, 1951.

[29] Cf. Elizabeth K. Nottingham, "Toward an Analysis of the Effects of Two World Wars on the Role and Status of Middle-Class Women in the English-Speaking World," *American Sociological Review*, December 1947, XII, 666-75.

5. *Education of the Wife.* Education is another factor in the performance of marital roles, especially that of the wife. In marriages where both husband and wife have been to college, it is difficult to perpetuate the patriarchal roles. When men and women have sat side-by-side in the college classroom, they bring a different set of "self-other patterns" [31] to their marriage than would have been the case without this equalitarian experience. In other words, the educated wife has a different set of expectations toward her own marital role, as well as that of the husband toward herself, than has the uneducated wife. The latter often accepts without question the traditional family roles, whereas the educated wife is not satisfied to retain a subordinate status.

Under the system of free public education in the United States, the proportion of boys and girls under eighteen enrolled in school is the same, with 85 per cent of both sexes in this category. After the age of eighteen, the males still in school predominate. Even at this level, however, the ratio of males to females is only two to one. There are approximately twice as many men as women enrolled in college,[32] which represents a tremendous recent change in social attitudes toward the intellectual capacities of women. Many college women, however, never marry, which fact reduces somewhat the equalitarian trend in marital roles.[33] The reason for this situation is probably two-fold: (a) the higher standards of educated women who are consequently unable to find adequate mates; (b) the male tendency to marry women with less education than themselves, perhaps in a subconscious attempt to maintain the myth of masculine superiority.[34]

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[30] See Hazel Kyrk, "Who Works and Why," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, May 1947, CCLI, 44-52.

[31] The phrase is Cottrell's. Cf. "The Analysis of Situational Fields in Social Psychology," *op. cit.*

[32] Bureau of the Census, "School Enrollment: October, 1951," *Current Population Reports: Population Characteristics*, Series P-20, No. 37, February 18, 1952.

Social roles are organized patterns of group expectations that channelize the behavior of husbands and wives and are handed down in the culture. Insofar as marriage is based upon these role patterns, it is a social relationship in the most complete sense. These roles are first experienced in the parental family, and the individual incorporates them into his own personality. These parental roles govern his own expectations of marriage, both in terms of his behavior toward his wife and hers toward him. In the process of social change, behavior in (and out of) marriage changes more rapidly than the definitions incorporated in the social roles. Hence many persons are currently engaging in behavior that is not in accord with the traditional roles. The marital roles also differ between the segments of a heterogeneous society. Such social factors as class position, occupational level, employment status, and education bring about variations in marital roles. These variations render more difficult the task of marital adjustment.

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[33] Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, "The American Wife," *Statistical Bulletin*, April 1951.

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CONJUGAL ROLES AND MARITAL SOLIDARITY

Marital roles take a variety of forms. Some involve the economic behavior of the husband and wife. The traditional economic roles assume the husband as the principal breadwinner and the wife as devoting her attention to the children and the home. These roles are in the process of modification, as millions of married women are gainfully employed. Marital roles also involve biological behavior, as the husband and wife respond to a complex group of social expectations concerning the number of children they will have and when they will have them. Other marital roles have to do with the behavior of the husband and wife as parents and their relationships to the children at different stages in the family cycle. Still other roles are related to the sexual relationships of marriage. These roles are a product of the social attitudes which the individuals bring to the marriage. In these and other fields, the husband and wife act out, as best they can, the various forms of behavior that have been tacitly defined as appropriate to their status.

The Nature of Conjugal Roles

We have considered some of these roles in the preceding chapter. We shall consider others in subsequent chapters, in connection with the functions of the family. The roles of husband and wife are closely related to the functions which the family is expected to perform in any society. Economic roles reflect the economic system in which the family operates—that is, whether the society is primarily agricultural, commercial, or industrial. Biological roles also reflect the way of life and cannot be understood apart from it. The family tends to have more children in an agricultural society, where children are an economic asset, than in an urban, industrial society, where children are an economic liability.

Many of the social roles that comprise the family repertoire thus are better understood in connection with the institutional functions. We shall, therefore, deal with these roles—notably, the economic, biological, parental, and affectional—in their appropriate institutional context, in Part IV. There is one role, however, that uniquely belongs in a discussion of the social relationships of marriage. That is the conjugal role.

The conjugal role is based upon the assumption that the husband and wife are the closest persons in the world to each other—closer than romantic lovers, closer than friends of the same sex, and closer (because of the adult quality of the relationship) even than parents and children. The conjugal role is not new; for thousands of years husbands and wives have loved, cherished, and respected each other. What *is* new about the conjugal role is the complexity of expectations that it involves in our society. In this context, the conjugal role means that the spouses regard each other as romantic lovers, intellectual companions, business associates, fellow parents, bosom friends, and practical nurses. In other cultures, many of these roles are ascribed to other persons, occupying other statuses such as that of mistress, male friend, business partner, or intellectual colleague. But in our society husband and wife are expected mutually to embody all of these relationships and more.

Sumner has given us a succinct description of conjugal affection. "It is based," he says, "on esteem, confidence, and habit. . . . It depends on the way in which each pair arranges its affairs, develops its sentiments, and forms its habits." [1] This reciprocal relationship is not an easy one. "Conjugal affection," continues Sumner, "makes great demands on the good sense, spirit of accommodation, and good nature of each." [2] These qualities are not present in every person, nor are they forthcoming in every marriage. Conjugal affection is, furthermore, a matter of time, for it cannot be hurried. Nor does conjugal affection arise automatically. It must be achieved by patience, perseverance, and forbearance. Many couples are unwilling or unable to make this achievement.

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[1] William Graham Sumner, *Folkways* (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1906), p. 363.

[2] *Ibid.*

Many erstwhile romantic lovers experience in marriage the waning of the fires of romantic rapture that characterized their relationship during courtship. Without realizing that there is something more fundamental in marriage than romance, such saddened romantics may conclude that their marriage is not a success. For many of these couples, the divorce court seems the only solution.[3] To be successful over the years, marriage must be based upon something more substantial than romantic love. That vital something is conjugal affection.

Conjugal affection is, therefore, the name that covers a variety of social attitudes that make for a permanently happy marriage. Conjugal attitudes by their very nature are reciprocal, since they evolve from the close and continuous interaction of two persons. A husband cannot have conjugal affection for his wife if she does not reciprocate, since much of his affection arises from his realization of a similar sentiment in her. The reciprocal character of social roles is clearly illustrated in conjugal affection, for reciprocity is their very life. Many other roles are imposed (or learned) from without, in the sense that the individual learns his role without knowing beforehand, except in a general way, what the other person does in return. In the conjugal role, however, the partners cannot be told in advance what they are supposed to do or feel. Their behavior evolves under the repeated contacts of daily life. In a literal sense, conjugal roles are *social habits*.

Conjugal roles are also the product of a democratic society. They cannot exist where the wife is expected to regard her husband as a superior being and he in turn is expected to accept this veneration as part of the nature of things. In the patriarchal family, the patterns of authority are established so that the major powers of decision are vested with the husband, who assumes this role as a part of his normal male heritage. The wife who seeks to influence family decisions on matters not in her prescribed sphere must do so by subterfuge or by the strength of her personality. In this case, she is violating the role expectations of the patriarchal society. In a democratic society, however, these powers are, in large measure, granted to the wife by the mores, and she receives them as part of the respect accorded to the individual personality in a democracy. Conjugal roles can exist only in a society where each individual is treated as an end in himself, not as a means to an end.

[3] Cf. Mabel A. Elliott and Francis E. Merrill, *Social Disorganization*, 3rd ed. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1950), chap. 17, "The Romantic Fallacy."

Conjugal roles are, finally, the product of communication. Marital interaction cannot take place without communication, any more than society itself can. John Dewey has indicated that "Society not only continues to exist *by* transmission, *by* communication, but it may fairly be said to exist *in* transmission, *in* communication." [4] We may very well substitute "marriage" for "society" in this context, for the relationship is equally close. Communication in this sense, furthermore, does not mean monosyllables over the morning paper, but interpersonal communication on matters of deep concern in the fulfillment of the various marital roles. "Talking things over" is the most important part of such a relationship.

The concept of the family as "a unity of interacting personalities" implies such constant and intimate communication between its members.[5] Strictly speaking, the family includes the multiple relationships between parents and children and between siblings, which we shall consider below. We are concerned here primarily with *marital* roles and *marital* interaction, as they exist between husband and wife. These interpersonal relationships are the basis of conjugal affection. Communication is vital to this process.

The basis for any marriage—whether deepening with the passing years or becoming increasingly tenuous under the corrosive force of marital frustration—thus lies in thousands of individual contacts. These contacts lay the foundation for the common values, the similar definitions, and the intricate network of habits that increasingly unite the couple. The direction this effort takes, the kind of relationship that eventuates from such personal interaction, is the work of the two individuals most directly concerned. The ultimate success of marriage in our society is largely individual, even though the roles are partially determined by the society. In this adventure, all other agencies—families, neighbors, the church, and the state—are warned off. The effort stands or falls on an individual basis.

Participation and Conjugal Roles

We have considered communication in terms of the internal relationships between the married pair. Participation refers to the communication of the married couple with the outside world. The romantic lover may wish to live the rest of his life in the exclusive company of his beloved, but he is obviously unable to do so. The couple cannot live in a world of their own. They must participate with others, and they ordinarily do so as a unit. Most conventional social relationships are based upon joint participation. Husbands are seldom invited to certain functions without their wives and vice versa. Such participation has an important bearing on conjugal affection.

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[4] John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1916), p. 5. His Italics.

[5] Ernest W. Burgess, "The Family as a Unity of Interacting Personalities," *The Family*, March 1926, VII, 3-9.

The success of this conjugal participation depends upon the qualities which the individuals bring to the marriage. If husband and wife have essentially similar cultural backgrounds, possess similar intellectual interests, and consider the same things important, their outside participation will render their conjugal roles more effective. In their study of the chances of success or failure in marriage, Burgess and Cottrell found that "likeness in the impress of cultural backgrounds of the couple is associated with happiness, and marked difference with unhappiness in marriage." [6] If such likenesses do not exist, the participation may be somewhat less than felicitous and the degree of conjugal affection not as great as might be hoped. Given an initial companionship plus a desire to grow together, each member may develop interests considered valuable by the other, thereby increasing the range of joint participation.

The hours spent outside the home may thus be productive of conjugal affection or its opposite. Many couples never evolve a satisfactory pattern in this respect. In a study of marital adjustment, 13.6 per cent of the husbands and wives stated that they had *never* made a satisfactory adjustment outside the home—that is, in their social activities and leisure-time pursuits. The difficulty of such adjustment was especially apparent among the wives. A larger proportion of the wives failed to adjust to the husband's conception of their role in social activities than reported a similar failure in sex relations and financial expenditure.[7] Both husbands and wives may hold expectations of conjugal participation which they are unable to realize.

Participation in outside activities exerts an important influence upon marital happiness and hence, by implication, upon conjugal roles. In a study of happily-married as compared to divorced persons, Locke found that the number of friends which the husband and wife have in common has a close association with their marital happiness. Those wives with few friends in common with their husbands are apparently poorer marital risks than those who have many such common relationships. The possession of mutual friends is also an index to the "sociability" of the spouses, and couples with a high degree of this characteristic (other things being equal) seem to have a better chance of success than those who do not. The spouses who enjoy participation are laying the foundation for conjugal affection and a successful marriage.[8]

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[6] Ernest W. Burgess and Leonard S. Cottrell, Jr., *Predicting Success or Failure in Marriage* (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1939), p. 88.

[7] Judson T. Landis, "Length of Time Required to Achieve Adjustment in Marriage," *American Sociological Review*, December 1946, XI, 668-69.

Habituation and Conjugal Roles

"Mere prolonged association with any decent person," it has been suggested, "creates in most of us a tepid affection." [9] This statement represents the least common denominator of conjugal affection, in that two persons, no matter how divergent, can probably develop a minimum of mutual affection merely through force of habit. Two people cannot be totally out of sympathy with *everything* the other says or does. The habitual pattern of shared experiences thus ordinarily produces at least a "tepid affection." The conjugal role involves far more than this, however, as the many habitual relationships bind the couple together in mutual dependence. As they know each other more intimately and their behavior becomes increasingly routinized, husband and wife become mutually indispensable. Each has his or her own duties, responsibilities, and prerogatives, tacitly arranged through trial and error. In this way, each comes to count on the other.

Habit thus has a generally salubrious effect upon marriage, although the romantic would be shocked at such a thought. Habit implies monotony, which, contrary to the general opinion, is a good thing. "The speedy achievement of a high level of monotony," says Mayo, "is absolutely necessary to successful marriages. . . . To the young and ardent I have no doubt that middle-aged matrimony seems unduly monotonous. To those who are middle-aged and happy it seems to hold a serenity and a complexity of interests that compares well with the passing fevers of youth." [10] The romantic infatuation of two young people is an exciting and ephemeral relationship marked by high emotional tension. A happy marriage is a permanent situation, made so by the cohesive force of habit clustered about the daily business of life. This is doubtless what La Rochefoucauld meant when that great aphorist said that "There are good marriages, but there are no delicious ones."

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[8] Harvey J. Locke, *Predicting Adjustment in Marriage* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1951), pp. 229-36.

[9] Katharine Fullerton Gerould, "Romantic Divorce," *Scribner's Magazine*, November 1930, LXXXVIII, 490.

Marital roles are themselves social habits. We have considered this factor in the preceding chapter and need not repeat our analysis here. It is sufficient to indicate that the development of conjugal roles implies the formation of reciprocal habits under the impact of daily living. Marital roles are more *social* than habits involving only one person, for by definition they involve two persons and the mutual expectations that have been established to meet recurrent situations. In the conjugal role, the husband and wife are constantly reacting in terms of their conception of their own behavior, as well as that of the other. Many of these conceptions are conditioned responses to everyday existence. Once established, these habits have great compulsive power over the members of the wedding.

The social habits of marriage thus exert a strong influence in maintaining the relationship itself. Husbands and wives become so accustomed to each other that they do not wish to change the elements in the conjugal role that have become second nature. These elements range all the way from similarities concerning the time of going to bed and getting up in the morning, to attitudes toward religion, the training of children, or the spending of money. This does not mean that two persons of entirely different temperaments, social values, and cultural backgrounds can, by the magic of habit, become perfectly mated. The number of divorces granted to couples married for five, ten, or even twenty years suggests that mere habit by itself cannot bring about conjugal affection. Given the requisite temperamental, personal, and cultural factors to start with, however, habit adds to the efficacy of the conjugal role.

Habit in conjugal affection may even change the personality of the spouses. In the sociological sense, personality refers to "the sum and organization of those traits which determine the role of the individual in the group." [11] In marriage, two persons are brought into constant and intimate contact over a prolonged period, in which each is playing a series of reciprocal roles. The expectations of one partner tend to call out similar or complementary behavior in the other, and role-playing thus modifies the personalities of the spouses. Such close mutual association may cause each to become more like the other in personal tastes, attitudes, and interests.[12] The tiny threads of habit gradually become ropes and then cables. Conjugal affection is solidly supported by these ties.

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[10] Elton Mayo, "Should Marriage Be Monotonous?" *Harper's Magazine*, September 1925, CLI, 420.

Social interaction is based upon the ability of the individual to take the role of the other person, to put himself in the position of the other and react as he thinks the other would react.[13] This is a basic element in the development of personality, which we shall consider at length in chapter 18. We may indicate here that marriage is, in this sense, a prolonged process of taking the role of the other and attempting to act as one thinks the other would like to have him act. In this process, as Waller and Hill cogently point out, we become like the person whose role we are taking.[14]

In our efforts to put ourselves in the position of our spouse, we tend to view many things as he or she views them. We often grow to like the same foods, enjoy the same forms of entertainment, and consider the same values important as does the person whose role we are constantly taking. The person looks on the world, as it were, through the eyes of his spouse, because he has become so accustomed to taking the role of the other in imagination. In a real sense, the individual has thereby literally become a part of his husband or wife. The role-taking process has brought the personalities of the spouses together and made them more alike.

Consensus and Conjugal Roles

The stereotype has survived in popular mythology that, in the patriarchal family, the husband makes all the important decisions.

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[11] Robert E. Park and Ernest W. Burgess, *Introduction to the Science of Sociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1924), p. 70.

[12] Mary Schooley, "Personality Resemblances among Married Couples," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, October-December 1936, XXXI, 340-47.

[13] George Herbert Mead, *Mind, Self, and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934).

[14] Willard Waller, *The Family*, rev. Reuben Hill (New York: The Dryden Press, 1951), p. 86.

This canard is so palpably false that such a realistic people as the French, who operate under a reasonable facsimile of the patriarchal system, do not even bother to deny it. The husband unquestionably makes many important decisions in those cultures where remnants of the patriarchal system have lingered on. But a married couple makes hundreds of decisions every week, ranging in importance from what movie they will see, if any, to whether the husband should quit his job and look for another.

Many of these decisions are made by the wife, and it is eminently fitting that they should be. Many more are made by the husband, since they come within his special competence. Others are made by a process of intellectual synthesis, the nature of which is not always perceptible, even to the participants. The degree of consensus in these decisions is a function of the general character of the marriage. If the other hallmarks of conjugal affection are present, consensus on important questions will ordinarily follow as a matter of course.

One of the basic characteristics of conjugal roles is thus the intimate consultation between husband and wife when arriving at agreement on important matters. When each party treats the other as a responsible adult whose opinion should be consulted, conjugal affection is generally found to be strongly developed. This democratic method of resolving questions of authority is an effect rather than a cause of conjugal affection. If the individuals have substantially the same (or complementary) attitudes and values, if their temperaments are reasonably compatible, the personal give-and-take of consensus will then follow more or less automatically. Such a democratic attitude toward authority is an important element in the conjugal role.

The degree of consensus is especially important in modern marriage, where solutions are reached jointly, rather than unilaterally by the husband. This means that many decisions which, in other societies, customarily fall to the husband now become the joint responsibility of husband and wife. Matters fall within the purview of family discussion that have hitherto been based upon the mores and admitted of no discussion. Under these conditions, the husband was acting in the name of the family in making decisions that interpreted the mores. This did not mean that his role was an arbitrary one, in which he deliberately monopolized the family authority for his own ends. Rather the husband was entrusted by the mores with most policy decisions, and neither he nor the wife thought of questioning this impersonal authority.[15]

Family decisions are also more important in modern marriage than in earlier societies because of the complexity of the society in which the modern family operates. Many questions are essentially new to the family and place great stress on the abilities of the spouses to work out satisfactory agreements. The question as to whether or not the wife should work outside the home is a comparatively new one, for in an agricultural society the problem ordinarily never arose. In the present-day family, however, 26.7 per cent of all married women are in the labor force, a matter that involves many crucial family adjustments.[16]

In an earlier society, furthermore, the employment status of the husband was largely fixed by custom, and the decision as to what job to seek therefore did not arise. The complexity of family decisions also reflects the increase in the number of consumer durable goods (for example, refrigerators, automobiles, television sets) which are currently available to the average family. With a growing variety of demands on the consumer dollar, the difficulty of family decision is correspondingly increased. In a democratic society, varied possibilities of consumer expenditure are open to all families, rather than merely to the wealthy few. This broadening of the material horizon for millions of families is one of the important characteristics of the democratic way of life. In terms of consensus, however, the difficulties of family decision are unquestionably increased.

We may present a brief picture of the democratic family in the matter of authority. Conjugal roles ideally tend to assume an equalitarian-democratic pattern in such a family. The wife takes pride in her role as homemaker and mother, as well as that of partner to her husband. The latter recognizes the contributions of his wife and regards them as additions to the family welfare, rather than as possible threats to his own ego. The husband may or may not be a great success as provider, but he accepts his limitations in this respect because of his wife's acceptance of him as he is. The partners have worked out a system of authority based upon a common philosophy of the family. Democratic decisions are made concerning the management of money, the purchase of house furnishings, the selection of the place and type of residence, family recreation, social participation outside the home, and rearing the children. On these and other questions, authority patterns take the form of joint decisions, except in certain spheres where one member is clearly more competent.[17]

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[15] For an extensive discussion of the changing authority patterns of the family, cf. Carle C. Zimmerman, *Family and Civilization* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1947).

[16] Bureau of the Census, "Marital Status of Women in the Labor Force: April 1951," *Current Population Reports: Labor Force*, Series P-50, No. 37, December 26, 1951.

It is significant that these (and other) patterns of parental authority apparently perpetuate themselves from generation to generation. Children reared in families where authority takes this equalitarian-democratic form tend to adopt the same roles in their own families of procreation. Such children early develop a sense of responsibility and assume adult roles that look to similar behavior in their spouses. In this way, they "learn how to cooperate, how to share in family crises, how to contribute to family planning, and how to use . . . democratic techniques in group living." [18] The experience of observing democratic decisions in their own parental families has conditioned them to act as responsible adults and also to look for spouses who will do likewise. Persons with such an early background are promising candidates for democratic relationships in their own families.

Marriage is, therefore, "a decision-making association." [19] If the decisions are made by the husband or are present in the mores, no very difficult problems arise. If the decisions are made by a democratic process, the relationship becomes more complex, especially when persons profess to follow democratic methods but actually are dictators. Democratic discussions that are carried to their logical conclusions, with each party having his share in the ultimate decision, are characteristic of conjugal roles. Discussions broken off abruptly, with one party making a final decision before all the facts are in, are not in the democratic tradition. If one person attempts to act arbitrarily or tries to conceal his own motives, the resulting decision will depart from strict consensus. The person who attempts to fool his spouse by hiding his own motives may temporarily gain his ends. But he does so at the sacrifice of any real consensus.[20]

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[17] Hazel L. Ingersoll, "A Study of the Transmission of Authority Patterns in the Family," *Genetic Psychology Monographs*, 1948, XXXVIII, 288-90.

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 290.

[19] Waller, *The Family*, p. 339.

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 340.

Friendship and Conjugal Roles

A final element in conjugal affection is the simple fact of personal friendship. Many couples apparently seldom experience this sentiment. "In general," the authors of *Middletown* point out, "a high degree of companionship is not regarded as essential for marriage. There appears to be between Middletown husbands and wives of all classes when gathered together in informal leisure-time groups relatively little spontaneous community of interest." [21] This situation often involves the gravitation of men and women into two distinct groups in any social gathering. The same sort of physical and psychological withdrawal may also take place when husband and wife are alone, and the simple, friendly interaction between comrades is conspicuously absent. Husbands and wives who do not sincerely enjoy each other's company are missing one of the most satisfactory experiences that life can offer.

The shared and mutual enjoyment of various activities is an element in the personal friendship of the conjugal role. Some of these activities occur inside the home and others outside of it, but the important consideration is the fact of sharing. A significantly higher percentage of happily married persons (as compared to a group of divorced persons) reported mutual enjoyment of the following activities: going to church, reading, listening to the radio, attending sports events, and hearing music. These activities can also be experienced individually, but the fact of mutual participation enhances the enjoyment. Two persons who are friends, as well as husband and wife, both demonstrate and enhance their friendship by such activities.[22]

Friendship is further characterized by the element of humor. Courtship and early marriage are often serious times, for the participants are still in a self-conscious emotional state. They are concerned with making a good impression and act so that the other person will appreciate their virtues. Furthermore, the premarital repressions tend to produce serious emotions in the individual, wherein he takes himself with undue gravity and is unable to laugh at himself. When two persons are in this state, they are often unsure of themselves and view their personalities and relationships in an overly serious vein. They may overemphasize a slight quarrel or a thoughtless word because they lack the perspective that comes from living together.

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[21] Robert S. Lynd and Helen M. Lynd, *Middletown* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1929), p. 118.

[22] Locke, *Predicting Adjustment in Marriage*, pp. 255-57.

The conjugal role is marked by a greater degree of relaxation and humor. Two people who have lived together for many years have, ordinarily, abandoned any attempt to impress the other with qualities which they do not have. Consequently, much of the initial tenseness has gone out of the relationship, and the spouses can joke with each other. Marriage has established countless common memories, many of which may be humorous or may have humorous connotations. The extent of this conjugal humor varies with the temperaments of the spouses as well as with the culture patterns. The essence of humor is the ability to take the role of the other and laugh at oneself. Experience in role-taking is a basic characteristic of marriage, as each person learns to put himself in the place of the other. An enhanced lightness becomes characteristic of the conjugal role, as each learns to look upon the other as a friend.

The importance of humor is demonstrated in Harvey J. Locke's study of happily married and divorced persons. Adjustment in marriage, he found, is closely associated with a sense of humor in both spouses, whereas maladjustment is linked with little or no such sense. Locke suggests that this trait may be related to marital adjustment (conjugal affection) in at least three senses: (a) A sense of humor may be an intrinsic element in personality that itself makes for marital adjustment; (b) A sense of humor may be both important in itself and indicative of other personality traits that are even more important; (c) A sense of humor may indirectly contribute to marital adjustment in the sense that many situations which might result in conflicts between maladjusted couples may be sources of amusement for those with a strongly developed sense of humor. In any event, those couples who can laugh at themselves seem to have a better chance of marital success than those who cannot.[23]

With the passing of the years, the husband and wife become the best friends either has ever had. Life without the other becomes increasingly difficult to conceive. As the two grow old together, they confide their fears and their hopes and their interests become increasingly similar. This calm acceptance is in striking contrast to the first flush of romantic love, when two people cannot truly be friends because of the many unresolved tensions. Conjugal friendship is impossible to romantic lovers, who are still enthralled with the mystery of the other person. When husband and wife have truly become friends, however, they can rarely entertain serious thoughts of divorce. You may divorce a lover with whom, for one reason or another, you fall out of love. But you do not divorce your best friend.

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[23] Locke, *ibid.*, pp. 221-24.

The Results of Conjugal Affection

Conjugal affection involves considerations other than participation, habituation, consensus, and friendship, although these intangibles are the most important elements. More tangible benefits also derive from conjugal roles. The husband and wife care for each other in times of sickness, depression, and general uncertainty as to what the next day will bring. These roles may take such prosaic but important forms as providing regular meals, regular hours of rest, and general solicitude for the welfare of the spouse. "Obviously," comments the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, "marriage is a stabilizing influence in the life and health of the individual." [24]

1. *Mortality*. The importance of marriage is indicated by the death rates, which are significantly lower for married men at all age levels. This differential shows the effects of such factors as greater regularity, better care in case of illness, and (presumably) greater emotional stability. It is true that the man who marries is sufficiently healthy to work for a living and support his family, whereas the man who cannot so qualify probably does not marry. In spite of this selective factor, the mortality figures for married men, as contrasted to the divorced and single, bear eloquent testimony to the efficacy of the conjugal role.[25]

The comparative mortality for the married woman is somewhat more complicated, because of the risk of childbearing. Until recent decades, the mortality rate for married women in the childbearing age groups was greater than that for spinsters, widows, and divorcees. The long-term decline in the birth rate has meant that married women are less exposed to the physical hazards of bearing children. This factor is responsible for some of the improvement in the mortality of married women. Scientific medicine has been a second factor, whereby the health of the mother is safeguarded during every stage of the childbearing process. As a result of these factors, the mortality of married women in the childbearing years since 1940 has been less than that of unmarried women. This fact further testifies to the generally salubrious effect of marriage and conjugal affection.[26]

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[24] Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, "The Married Live Longer," *Statistical Bulletin*, July 1943.

[25] Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, "Married Women Show Striking Decline in Mortality," *Statistical Bulletin*, April 1950.

2. *Alcoholism.* Conjugal affection protects its members from the vicissitudes and frustrations of life in other and more subtle ways. Many deep psychological needs are satisfied in marriage, and hence the individual tends to be better adjusted within than without the marital state. "It is hard to believe," says the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, "that the favorable mortality from tuberculosis, accidents, suicide, and such social conditions as alcoholism and syphilis for the married does not arise, directly or indirectly, as a benefit accruing from a normal family life." [27] This statement does not imply that marriage and conjugal affection provide a panacea for the ills of the flesh and the spirit or that marriage will automatically solve all the varied needs of its participants. It does suggest, however, that conjugal affection guards against many of the mental and physical tribulations of a complex society. For many persons, home is the only haven in an atomic world.

Many forms of personal disorganization reflect the vicissitudes of this world. Alcoholism is one such form. Many, although by no means all, of those who become compulsively addicted to alcohol are a prey to frustration, insecurity, and neurotic compulsion before they take their first drink. Alcoholism for them is a symptom of a deep personal maladjustment, of whose nature they are often unaware. Difficulties of this kind are apparently more common among the single, the widowed, and the divorced than among the married, judging from the death rates from alcoholism. In New York State in a representative year, the death rate from alcoholism was more than twice as high for the single as for the married men. Alcoholism is not among the leading causes of death, but the difference in this respect between the various marital statuses is nevertheless significant.[28]

Many persons, admittedly, find marriage so intolerable that they become compulsive drinkers for this reason. Alcoholism may reflect some deep-seated maladjustment in the personality of the afflicted spouse. The complex pattern of reciprocal expectations comprising the conjugal role is often too difficult for the person whose neurotic conflicts take the form of alcoholism. The potential alcoholic may never marry at all, thereby further increasing the figures in favor of the married. The potential alcoholic, indeed, has been characterized in the following terms: "dreamers, immature, frightened of the opposite sex, aggressive, asocial, without close friends, suspicious, impossibly idealistic, generally introverted, escapist, emotionally childish." [29] These traits would tend to keep the individual from marrying in the first place. Nevertheless, the differentials in death from alcoholism between the married, the single, the widowed, and the divorced still suggest that conjugal affection plays an important part in personality adjustment.

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[26] *Ibid.*

[27] Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, "Why Married People Live Longer," *Statistical Bulletin*, November 1941.

[28] *Ibid.*

3. *Suicide*. Suicide is the final end result of personal disorganization.[30] The individual who takes his own life has come to the end of his powers. The cohesive forces holding him to existence have become so weakened that they can no longer counterbalance the will to die.[31] One of these cohesive forces is conjugal affection. Persons who have never experienced conjugal affection or who have been deprived of its consolations by death or divorce have their hold on life correspondingly weakened. They tend to commit suicide more frequently than those who are still living in the network of reciprocal expectations of marriage. The integrative force of marriage upon the life organization is so important that the breaking of this relationship may cause the individual to abandon life itself.

The importance of the conjugal role is clearly demonstrated by the differentials in the suicide rate between married and single men. In the age group from twenty to forty-four, suicide accounts for almost twice as many deaths proportionately among single men as among married men. The functional interrelationships that make up the marital roles are not easily broken. It has been suggested that "the companionship and responsibilities of family life strengthen the will to live when seemingly insurmountable problems present themselves." [32] The marriage relationship is not one of uninterrupted tranquility, no matter how strong the conjugal role may be. Nevertheless, there is something about the relationship that causes the individual to cling to life more strongly than the one who lacks these contacts.

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[29] Selden D. Bacon, "Excessive Drinking and the Institution of the Family," *Alcohol, Science, and Society* (New Haven: *Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol*, 1945), lecture 16, p. 228.

[30] Elliott and Merrill, *Social Disorganization*, 3rd ed., chap. 14, "The Suicide."

[31] Cf. Karl A. Menninger, *Man against Himself* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1938).

In a complex and dynamic society, the individual stretches out his hand eagerly for emotional security to bolster his ego against impersonal forces which he cannot understand. Conjugal affection is one of the most important elements making for this security. As a celebrated psychiatrist has said, ". . . if one feels fundamentally helpless toward a world which is invariably menacing and hostile, then the search for affection would appear to be the most logical and direct way of reaching out for any kind of benevolence, help, or appreciation." [33] In one way or another, most people in our society seek such solace, whether or not they are conscious of the search.

In this chapter, we have pointed out that conjugal affection must be achieved, not taken for granted. The conjugal roles are, furthermore, the most clearly *reciprocal* of all such relationships, since they depend upon behavior by one of the spouses and the expectations of appropriate behavior in return. Conjugal roles are expressions of marital *interaction*, and one person cannot play them unless the other cooperates. These roles arise from the intimate communication of marriage. Included in conjugal roles are such factors as: (a) communication within the marital relationship; (b) mutual participation outside of it; (c) habituation from long association; (d) democratic methods of reaching agreement; and (e) strong and devoted personal friendship. Husbands and wives who have experienced conjugal affection are indeed fortunate. They are both happier and healthier.

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[32] Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, "Why Married People Live Longer."

[33] Karen Horney, *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1937), pp. 105-6.

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THE PHYSIOLOGY OF MARITAL INTERACTION

Marriage, as we have observed, is a social relationship. It is carried on in an atmosphere of cultural expectations, which have been imparted to the participants by their social environment. In previous chapters, we have dealt with some of the essentially *social* aspects of these relationships, insofar as they reflect the larger environment. In the present chapter, we are still thinking in social terms, but the emphasis has shifted from the symbolic to the physical realm. We shall therefore concern ourselves, in the present context, with some of the physiological aspects of the marital relationship. Included in this category are such matters as the physiology of conception, pregnancy, fertility, sterility, menstruation, artificial insemination, and contraception.

Physiological Aspects of Marital Roles

In the following discussion, the emphasis therefore changes from the elements of the marriage bond that are largely or exclusively sociopsychological to those with clearly physiological implications. The fundamental concern remains the same, however; namely, the *sociological* rather than the *biological* or *gynecological*. The authors of this book are not biological scientists, but sociologists, and as such their primary interest and competence lie in the sociological rather than the biological field. The biological treatment will therefore be on an elementary level and will primarily stress the social relationships, rather than the physiological complexities. We shall endeavor to present such information concerning the physiology of conception and reproduction as will assist the subsequent marital adjustment of our readers, who are concerned with conception, pregnancy, sterility, and contraception in the roles of prospective husbands and wives, not as specialists.

In an earlier time when biological science was in its rudimentary stages, the average person could hardly be expected to understand the mechanisms of reproduction. Under present conditions, it is often assumed that young people approaching marriage will have at least an elementary knowledge of this vital subject. This assumption is not justified by the facts. There has been remarkable progress in scientific knowledge relative to the biological relationships of marriage and the family.[1] In many cases, however, not even the rudiments of this knowledge have percolated to the more highly educated segment of the population, let alone to the large majority with no more than a high school education. A combination of religious prohibitions, moral taboos, and folk superstitions has been successful in preventing this part of our scientific heritage from finding its legitimate place in the mass culture.

The situation has been gradually changing, as the forces of enlightenment have slowly won the right to disseminate available knowledge on these vital aspects of marital relationships. In an earlier generation, for example, medical practitioners were given little, if any, instruction in contraception. The statutes against obscenity were such that the medical schools were loath to run afoul of these laws. In the present day, the younger doctors are more emancipated. The favorable court decisions of recent decades have exempted the medical profession from many of the rigid penalties prescribed by the state statutes concerning the dissemination of contraceptive information.[2] In a related field, the successful battle against venereal disease has been possible only because the conspiracy of silence against these diseases in the public prints has been overcome.[3] At the present time, a determined struggle is being waged to include in the curricula of the public schools some of the simple facts of human physiology.

Knowledge of these and other facts is basic to the adequate performance of the affectional role in marriage. The affectional is one of the traditional functions of the family that is still performed, and its relative importance has increased, rather than decreased, as some of the other functions have declined. An important prerequisite to adjustment on the affectional level in marriage is an elementary knowledge of the biological, anatomical, and psychological aspects of sexual relationships. This knowledge by no means implies that the spouses should stress unduly the physical aspects of their marital relationships, but merely that they should have a rudimentary knowledge of the physiology of conception, the male and female anatomy, and the nature of the sexual impulse.

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[1] Cf. M. F. Nimkoff, "Technology, Biology, and the Changing Family," *American Journal of Sociology*, July 1951, LVII, 20-26. An extremely enlightening account of some of the recent discoveries in biological science, as they may be related to the family.

[2] Except in Connecticut and Massachusetts. Cf. "What Constitutes Obscene Literature?" *Human Fertility*, December 1945, X, 122 ff., also "Contraception and the Post Office," *Human Fertility*, June 1946, XI, 61.

[3] Cf. Thomas Parran, *Shadow on the Land—Syphilis* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1937).

Premarital Physical Examination

The adequacy of the sexual apparatus for the normal relations of marriage constitutes perhaps the most obvious factor in the physiological performance of marital roles. Certain physical abnormalities or immaturities may make sexual adjustment difficult and perhaps impossible. Some of these impediments may be remedied by simple medical or surgical treatment. The experience in premarital physical examinations indicates that approximately fourteen per cent of all couples preparing for marriage will subsequently be unable to have children. This situation arises from multiple, rather than single, factors, of which somewhat less than half are found in the man and somewhat more than half (on the average) are found in the woman. Among these physical difficulties are "injury, infection, surgical operation, queer anatomy, growth defects, glandular imbalance." Some couples may have several of these difficulties at the same time. Approximately half of this fourteen per cent can be aided to some degree of marital fertility. The other half will remain permanently childless.[4] The practice of having such a premarital examination seems to be increasing in frequency, especially among the college-trained segment of the population.[5]

This complete anatomical examination prior to marriage should not be confused with the so-called pre-marital examination laws passed by the several states. The state laws have unquestionably encouraged the private examination, but the two are not the same thing. The state laws are primarily concerned with the discovery and control of venereal disease, and accordingly require each applicant for a marriage license to submit to a standard laboratory blood test showing freedom from venereal disease (usually syphilis) in communicable form. The first such legislation was enacted in Connecticut in 1935, and at the present time the majority of states have similar laws. This rapid progress is itself indicative of the growing awareness of the hitherto taboo problem of physiological adjustment in marriage.

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[4] Lovett Dewees, "Premarital Physical Examination," *Successful Marriage*, eds. Morris Fishbein and Ernest W. Burgess (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1947), p. 55.

[5] Robert A. Harper, *Marriage* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1949), p. 112.

Intelligent young people are thus realizing the advantages to be derived from voluntary premarital medical check-ups. The best results are obtained when the woman goes to a gynecologist and the man to a urologist. A complete health examination will reveal whether or not the individual has any incipient or developed organic disease that might seriously interfere with marital adjustment. Tests of relative fertility and sterility may eliminate the mutual recriminations and maladjustments frequently resulting from infertile marriages. Instead of waiting until the first pregnancy to discover whether there are any such pelvic difficulties as are involved in Caesarean sections, the probabilities of normal childbearing may be determined prior to marriage. In view of the relationship between the glands of internal secretion and general health and temperament, it is also important to know whether this endocrine system is functioning properly.

In addition to direct and specific knowledge of the physiological functioning of the organism, valuable indirect benefits may be derived from a thorough premarital physical examination. In connection with the premarital examination, the doctor has an opportunity to clear up many fundamental misconceptions and the irrational fears associated therewith. Are diseases like epilepsy, cancer, alcoholism, diabetes, heart disorders, and manic-depressive psychoses inherited via the germ plasm? The wise doctor can do much to dispel the real fears young people often have growing out of an incomplete understanding of the mechanisms of inheritance.[6] Likewise, if the young people request it, the physician is the socially recognized person best qualified to give them information and guidance in the techniques of contraceptive practice. In this field, a reluctant parent, the corner druggist, or a misinformed contemporary are poor substitutes for the medical man. Another indirect benefit to be gained by the medical examination is the opportunity for the doctor to discuss with the prospective bride and groom the simple anatomy and the physiology of the genital system.[7]

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[6] Ernest R. Groves, *Marriage*, rev. ed. (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1941), chap. VIII.

The Physiology of Conception [8]

The gonads or sex glands of the male are called the testes. They form in the embryonic stage in the body cavity. Prior to birth they move downward through the inguinal rings, carrying with them the spermatic cords, nerves, and blood supply. They settle in the pouch of skin known as the scrotum. Their location in the male outside the body cavity, with a consequent lower temperature, may have some bearing on the problem of fertility. At the age of puberty, these glands are normally prepared to produce mature germ cells, known as spermatozoa. The seminiferous tubules or coiled arrangements in the testes are found, on examination, to contain sperm cells in all stages of development. From here they migrate to another coiled structure, the epididymis, where further maturation doubtless takes place in a favorable milky medium. From the epididymis, they pass into the tube (*vas deferens*) which will convey them to the urethra. Prior to their exit through the urethra, two other organs come into play, the seminal vesicles and the prostate gland, whose secretions furnish the necessary medium for the sperm cells.

The spermatozoa are infinitely small, and their number may be 300 million or more in a single emission. They form only a small part of the emission by volume, and the major part of such emission is composed of the various secretions. This mucilaginous mixture is thrown into the ejaculatory duct from which it proceeds by way of the urethra through the penis and leaves the body by way of the meatus. The urethral glands of Cowper and those of Littré may play a minor part in the process. Since the urethra is also the avenue for the disposal of the waste products of the bladder, there must be a nice adjustment between the operation of the ducts depositing the seminal emission and the muscles and nerves controlling urination.

A second major function of the testes is the production of the male sex hormone, called testosterone. This is released directly into the blood stream, and the cells from which it comes are activated by the indirect stimulation of the gonadotropic hormone secreted by the anterior lobe of the mastergland, the pituitary (hypophysis). The general purpose of the testicular hormone is that of giving to the individual sex tonicity and the development and continuance of secondary sex characteristics. In animals, it has been demonstrated that surgical removal of the pituitary leads to the atrophy of sex functions.[9]

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[7] Evelyn Millis Duvall and Reuben Hill, *When You Marry* (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1945), p. 139.

[8] For the succeeding discussion, the reader will find a helpful reference in Robert L. Dickinson, *Human Sex Anatomy*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore: The Williams and Wilkins Company, 1949).

The gonads of the female are known as ovaries. Anatomically, the male and female have similar structures: testes—ovaries; *vasa deferentia*—Fallopian tubes; penis—clitoris. The male testes perform two functions: (a) the production of the male germ cells; and (b) the secretion of male sex hormones. The female ovaries have similar functions: (a) the production of the female germ cells, the ova; and (b) the production and secretion of female hormones. Nature has been exceedingly prodigal in the production of viable spermatozoa, so that an infinitely large number are present in a single male emission. The production of viable female ova, however, is on a correspondingly meager scale. There are at birth thousands of potentially mature ova present in the ovarian tissue. Beginning with puberty, or shortly thereafter, the female generally produces one mature ovum in each menstrual cycle. This means that, in the total reproductive span of approximately thirty years, about five hundred mature and viable ova will be released. This figure is based on the fact that the most common length of the menstrual cycle is approximately twenty-eight days.

As a general rule, the ovum is released from the ovary about the midpoint of the menstrual cycle. This process is called ovulation. In the case of the twenty-eight-day cycle, this would be the fourteenth day. This period will serve as a convenient device for dividing the activity of the ovary into two phases: the first half of the cycle is usually referred to as the follicular (preovulatory) phase; the latter half as the luteal (postovulatory) phase. As the ovum develops within the ovarian tissue during its maturation, it surrounds itself with a follicle, known as the Graafian follicle. When the time comes for the ovum to be released, the follicle inclosing the egg has moved to the surface of the ovary, and the bursting of this follicle effects the release of the ovum. The burst follicle now becomes filled with a yellowish mass, whence comes the name *corpus luteum*. The derivative term used to characterize the second half of the cycle is, therefore, the luteal phase.

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[9] C. Donnell Turner, *General Endocrinology* (Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Company, 1949), p. 311.

The second function of the ovaries, as noted, is the production and delivery into the blood stream of female hormones. This is similar to the activity of the male testes, but it is more complicated. The starting point is again the anterior lobe of the pituitary, whose gonadotropic secretions serve to stimulate the ova-producing and hormone activity of the ovaries. The hormones secreted by the ovaries affect the inner lining of the uterus, which organ must be in a relatively constant state of preparation for the possible reception of a fertilized ovum. These glandular operations are not to be conceived of as a one-way street, in which the output of the pituitary acts, through the blood stream, on the ovaries which in turn act indirectly on the uterus. Rather should the system be conceived of as an interconnected, interdependent mechanism, involving constant *action* and *reaction*, the adequate functioning of the whole being dependent on the satisfactory activity of each of the parts.

In the first half of the menstrual cycle, one type of hormone called the follicular hormone or estrogen is secreted by the ovaries. Associated with the *corpus luteum*, there is a second type of hormone, the luteal hormone, or progesterone. If the ovum has been fertilized, then the activity of the *corpus luteum* with its associated hormone will continue to be needed in connection with the uterus. The continual functioning of the luteal hormone during early pregnancy apparently serves to inhibit the activity of the follicular hormone. If the ovum has not been fertilized, the preparation of the uterine walls will not be necessary, the *corpus luteum* will disappear, its associated hormone will not function, and the "signal" will be transmitted for the beginning of a new follicular phase.

The uterus or womb in the virgin state is a small, muscular, pear-shaped organ about three inches long. The upper two-thirds is called the body of the uterus and the lower third, the cervix. The cervix extends into the upper portion of the vaginal cavity. Extending out from either side of the upper part of the uterus is a small tube, about four inches long and with an opening at the uterine end about the size of the lead in an ordinary lead pencil. The opening at the opposite end of the tube is somewhat larger and contains frilled projections. These are the Fallopian tubes. Unlike the male anatomy, where the connection between the *vasa deferentia* and the testes is a direct one, there is no connection between the ends of the Fallopian tubes and the ovaries. When the ovum is released from the ovary, it normally finds its way into the associated tube.

In coitus, the male spermatozoa are deposited in the vaginal cavity, whence they move into the uterus through the cervical canal. When the sperm cells pass through the uterus into the tubes, conception will take place if, in the upper portion of one of the Fallopian tubes, an active, viable sperm cell meets with a mature, viable ovum. The union of the cells is then completed. Whereas each of the germ cells contained twenty-four chromosomes, now the fertilized egg has been restored to the normal human cell complement of forty-eight chromosomes. Cell division begins at once but apparently it is not accompanied by any increase in size.

The journey of the now-fertilized ovum down the tube to the uterus takes from four to six days. After it has arrived at the uterus, the fertilized egg appears "to search about" for a suitable home, for it does not embed itself immediately. The processes of division and growth proceed. Once firmly embedded, there begins the differentiation of cells and the appearance of the embryonic membrane (the chorion and amnion) and that saucer-shaped structure at the point of implantation known as the placenta. The placenta is associated not merely with the nourishment and elimination of waste of the growing embryo-fetus, but it also has a hormonic function. It is thought that the termination of pregnancy is signalized by the increased secretion of estrogen by the placenta.

These are the rudimentary facts with respect to the physiology of conception. In an unscientific era, it is easy to understand why the processes of conception and reproduction should have been viewed with such awe, dread, and mystery and why so many taboos should have become associated therewith. Among primitive peoples, rigid taboos surround woman at such times. Equally severe are the restrictions associated with the regular "flow of blood," the menses. This recurrent phenomenon is often associated in the minds of people of less advanced cultures with paroxysms of fear and horror. Various hypotheses have been presented to account for the origin of these fears and their consequent taboos, such as the male reactions of disgust, the superstitious fear of blood, or the notion that an evil power or spirit is present at this time.[10] The true explanation of such fears, however, does not essentially matter. What does matter is that, in the absence of knowledge, superstition fills the gap.

The twentieth century man is not so easily pardoned for his unscientific account of these biological phenomena. The popular notion that menstruation represents the discharge of an unfertilized ovum is almost as wide of the mark as the primitive's ridiculous fears. On common sense grounds, the ejection of an ovum of microscopic size could hardly be a sufficient explanation for a flow of blood lasting four or five days. The failure of an ovum to be fertilized in the menstrual cycle is, however, the beginning of a process that culminates in the menses at the conclusion of the cycle.

At the beginning of the period, the hormones activating the uterus were preparing the uterine walls for the possible reception of a fertilized ovum. But no fertilized ovum appeared to take advantage of the extensive preparation. Hence the inner lining of the uterus breaks down and is discharged from that organ. This is the phenomenon known as menstruation. For the better part of twenty-eight days the uterus was thus preparing a possible home for a fertilized egg. When the "expected guest" did not arrive, there was no need for the extensive preparations; they could be eliminated and the process begun all over again for a similar reception the following month.[11]

Infertility in Marriage

It is a natural assumption that two healthy people can normally initiate the process of reproduction in marriage. This is what happens in the majority of marital unions. But it is also true that, in perhaps one in ten marriages, there is inability to initiate the reproductive process by normal conception. This is what is meant by sterility or involuntary infertility in marriage. It is not to be confused with the fact that individuals vary in degree of fertility. One couple will find it possible for conception to take place within a month, whereas another couple may try for a year or two before success attends their efforts. Furthermore, young couples can initiate conception more quickly, in general, than can older couples.

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[10] Robert Briffault, *The Mothers* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1927), II, 397 ff.

To this day, varying folk-attitudes persist with respect to menstruation: cf. Theodora Abel and Natalie F. Joffe, "Cultural Backgrounds of Female Puberty," American *Journal of Psychotherapy*, January 1950, IV, 90-113.

[11] W. T. Pommerenke, "Determining the Time of Ovulation by Basal Temperature and the role of the Cervix in Infertility," *Transactions of the Third* American Congress on *Obstetrics and Gynecology* (Portland, Ore.: The Western Journal of Surgery Publishing Company, 1948), pp. 49-53.

Involuntary infertility also has nothing to do with contraception, although the notion is still widely prevalent that the prolonged use of contraceptives leads to sterility. There are, it is true, certain types of contraceptive devices, usually frowned upon by the medical profession, which can and do contribute to sterility. "The use of intrauterine and intracervical devices, irritant douches and suppositories," says one authority, "causes pelvic infections and changes in vaginal pH and flora, and severely affects the reproductive capacity, even to the point of permanent sterility." [12] On the other hand, the same authority says: "The proper use of contraceptives and modern mechanical devices, such as vaginal diaphragms and jellies and creams in the female and sheaths and condoms for the male, has practically no deleterious effect on the reproductive capacity of the couple." [13]

The percentage of married women (fifteen to seventeen per cent) who come to the end of their reproductive period without bearing children is not a reliable index of the extent of sterility in marriage. Premature death of the husband may have been a factor. The decision at the time of marriage to remain childless throughout their married life and the resultant use of contraceptive measures may have been the reason. In this connection, however, Dr. S. R. Meaker suggests that "it is most unusual . . . for a couple to practice contraception throughout their entire period of sexual activity. . . . The philoprogenitive urge is powerful, and the number of those who elect to remain voluntarily sterile from beginning to end is probably so small as to be negligible from the social and economic viewpoints." [14]

Normal conception followed by repeated failure to carry the child to full term also has a part in sterility, although in certain types of sterility cases there is a relationship between factors making for relative infertility and such failures. Another factor influencing the presence of childlessness may be a normal conception followed by the necessity, because of a serious health condition of the wife, of having the pregnancy interrupted legally by the attendant physician. Doubtless more frequent than this situation is the childlessness attendant on repeated abortions of the so-called criminal or illegal type. Due to the circumstances under which such operations are performed, damage is often done that leads to later sterility.

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[12] Samuel L. Siegler, "Taking the History of the Infertile Couple," *Transactions of the Third American Congress on Obstetrics and Gynecology*, p. 37.

[13] *Ibid.*

[14] Samuel R. Meaker, *Human Sterility* (Baltimore: The Williams and Wilkins Company, 1934), p. 9.

Only a generation ago, the prevalent attitude of married couples who found themselves unable to initiate the reproductive process was that of resignation to their fate. There was often a tendency for each to blame the predicament on the other. Since imputations of the lack of male "virility" are more serious in a society with a heritage of male dominance, it was natural that the wife should bear the brunt of the blame. Frustration leading to marital friction and discord was the inevitable consequence.

A concentrated attack on the problem, together with increased biological and medical knowledge, has changed the situation appreciably in recent years. Favorable publicity has come from those married couples who have submitted to the extensive procedures of clinical examinations and have been rewarded by having children. Favorable results have been reported in from fifteen to fifty per cent of the cases, depending on the clinic reporting. By favorable treatment is meant the subsequent ability to conceive and bear a full-term child. The lag between the amount of scientific information available, however, and the willingness of unfortunate couples to take advantage of such knowledge is still great.[15] Desperation often leads married couples to resort to doctors who prescribe unnecessary operations and fruitless but expensive glandular treatments.

In the absence of contraceptives, if a couple does not succeed in effecting conception within a year, the probabilities are that sterility in some degree exists in either or both. The first principle in seeking diagnosis and treatment is to recognize that *both* husband and wife should be examined. In individual cases, the wife or the husband may be solely at fault, but in many situations the infertility results from a combination of factors in both partners. What makes infertility such a complex problem is that the cause may not be a single difficulty in either member but a series of contributing causes in either or both.[16]

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[15] Groves, *Marriage*, rev. ed., p. 462.

Some of the requisites of fertility are: (1) the testes must produce normal spermatozoa; (2) these sperm cells must have free passage from the epididymis to the urethral meatus; (3) the vaginal and endocervical secretions must be chemically and mechanically favorable; (4) the uterus and the tubes must allow the free ascent of the spermatozoa; (5) the ovariotubal hiatuses must provide for the admission of the ova and their descent; and (6) the ovaries must be capable of producing and releasing normal ova.[17] This statement traces the progression of the sperm cell on its long and difficult journey from the testes to union with the ovum and is therefore a recapitulation of the physiology of conception. Conception is not a simple process to inaugurate. In spite of the fact that most married couples experience no difficulty, Raymond Pearl quotes with approval the following statement of C. G. Hartman: "The marvel is not how fertile but how sterile is humanity. Sterility, not contraception, is the biggest problem of the gynecologist." [18]

If either or both testes and ovaries have failed to develop to full maturity and hence are incapable of producing viable sperm or ova, it is obvious that conception will be impossible. This underdevelopment or infantilism may be due to pituitary deficiency or other organic factors in the life history of the individual. If it is sufficiently serious, then absolute sterility is the result, for which there is no hope. Absolute sterility resulting from failure of the gonads to develop properly is, however, extremely rare. More common is the malfunctioning of these organs either from diseases that attack them directly or from general constitutional conditions that act indirectly.

Techniques have been developed for testing the characteristics of the sperm cells as to number, morphology, motility and endurance. These tests include the direct semen analysis, the postcoital or Huhner test, and microscopic studies of a bit of testicular tissue secured by biopsy.[19] In the hands of the trained observer, these examinations will reveal sperm deficiencies. Such inadequacies may have been caused by mumps, tumors, tuberculosis, accidents, syphilis or a badly done hernia operation. Constitutional factors induced by diabetes, malaria, drugs, atomic radiation, infected tonsils, sinuses, teeth, and defective diet may be contributing factors. In the case of the ovaries, the most usual defects are cysts, inflammations, results of injuries, or faulty functioning in consequence of endocrine imbalance.

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[16] Siegler, "Taking the History of the Infertile Couple," *op. cit.*, p. 29.

Cf. also Lewis Michelson, "Diagnosis and Treatment of Impaired Fertility in the Male," pp. 42 ff. *Transactions of The American Congress on Obstetrics and Gynecology, op. cit.*

Irving F. Stein and Michael L. Leventhal, "Infertility and Sterility," *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, February 20, 1932, XCVIII, 621-27.

[17] Adapted from Meaker, *Human Sterility*, p. 15.

[18] Raymond Pearl, *The Natural History of Population* (London: Oxford University Press. 1939), p. 67.

Efforts Toward Marital Fertility

In the treatment of defective functioning of the testes and the ovaries, a restricted amount of surgery may be helpful. The general health and well-being of the individual can be improved by diet, exercise, and freedom from worry, anxiety, and tension. On the other hand, popular notions to the contrary notwithstanding, endocrine therapy has been relatively unsuccessful. In this connection, one authority states that this lack of success may be due, in the case of the anterior pituitary gland, to the lack of a preparation of adequate potency.[20] The same situation prevails with respect to the correction of malfunctioning of the ovaries. "Endocrine therapy in infertility," says the same authority, "has little to offer at the present time. . . . Thyroid extract, properly administered, is still the sheet anchor of the gynecologist." [21]

More success has attended the efforts to deal with another common cause of infertility, namely, the blocking of the tubes in both male and female. The tubules of the epididymis and the *vas deferens* may be blocked as a result of a former gonorrheal infection or for other cause. Simple operative procedures have been devised for remedying such defects.[22] The Fallopian passages may likewise be affected because of inflammation following gonorrhea or they may be partially or wholly closed on account of adhesions, postabortal infections, or tuberculosis.

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[19] Lewis Michelson, "Diagnosis and Treatment of Impaired Fertility in the Male," *op. cit.*, pp. 44-45.

[20] M. Edward Davis, "Rational Endocrine Therapy in Infertility," *Transactions of the International and Fourth American Congress on Obstetrics and Gynecology*, ed. George W. Kosmak (St. Louis: The C. V. Mosby Company, 1951), p. 732.

[21] *Ibid.*

[22] Lewis Michelson, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

Great progress has likewise been achieved in the perfection of tests for tubal patency. The two most familiar diagnostic procedures are: (a) insufflation, which involves the forcing of gas under pressure into the tubes and then observing the activity of the walls of the Fallopian structures by means of a graph; and (b) the injection of iodized oil or other substance, followed by visual observation of patency. These diagnostic techniques may also have therapeutic value if the occlusion is of such a character that these injections could again open the passages. In some instances, such defects will respond to the use of diathermy, antibiotics, or estrogen therapy; in other cases, operative procedures are indicated.[23]

The medium of the secretions of the prostate and the seminal vesicles is, if normally healthy, a favorable environment for the sperm cells. If these secretions are abnormal because of any defect in either the prostate or the vesicles, they may be hostile to the motility and viability of the sperm cells. The vaginal secretions are acid in content. Such acidity is detrimental to the life of spermatozoa, but under normal conditions a sufficiently large number survive to find their way into the cervical canal. Any excess acidity of the vaginal cavity can be easily and effectively treated. The endocervical mucus is alkaline and hence favorable to the ingress of sperms. There may also be an extreme mucal blockage at the entrance to the cervix, but this, too, lends itself to easy treatment. Where the uterus itself is affected by some disease or positional defect, this may be associated with the fact that the sperm is not finding its way into the tubes. Uterine abnormalities, however, are more likely to lead to spontaneous abortions and hence to infertility in this fashion.[24]

The matter is further complicated by the fact that emotional and psychological factors apparently have a bearing on infertility. Cases are reported of conceptions following clinical examinations of patients without any treatment having been instituted. A married couple may live together for five years or more, have a genuine desire for children, not employ any contraceptive measures, and yet fail to bring about conception. They are extremely zealous to have a child and decide to adopt one. Some time after the adoption of the new member of the family, a normal pregnancy ensues, and the couple may have no further difficulty in initiating the reproductive process.

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[23] I. C. Rubin, "Tubal Obstruction as a Cause of Sterility and Its Non-operative Treatment," *Transactions of the International and Fourth American Congress on Obstetrics and Gynecology*, *op. cit.*, pp. 698-710.

[24] Werner Steinberg, "Uterine Malformations in the Management of Sterility and Infertility," *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*, April 1952, LXIII, 827-35.

This situation may be explained by several factors. One is the simple fact that, during the period when the couple vainly tried to have a child, either husband or wife or both had some physiological or organic difficulty. After they had adopted a child, this condition cleared up, and a normal conception could then take place. On the other hand, some subtle emotional factors may be involved in the assumption of parenthood which acted favorably on whatever organic conditions were involved in the previous infertility. The partners to a sterile marriage may also be divorced and, on remarriage, each has children by the new union. This may mean nothing more than that each of the individuals was of low relative fertility, whereas the new marriages were contracted with persons of relatively high fertility. Other hidden factors may also be involved.[25]

Adoption of children is one solution to the desire for a family when sterility of a primary nature is indicated. Another method applicable in certain types of cases is artificial insemination. In terms of the number of children born normally, the number conceived by artificial insemination is infinitesimally small. But in terms of the total number so conceived over a period of years, the number is surprisingly large. Of 30,000 doctors circularized some years ago, 7,462 reported that pregnancy had been successfully achieved in 9,489 cases by artificial insemination. "Artificial insemination was employed so successfully," it was reported, "that in 1,357 patients more than one pregnancy was effected by this means. . . . The 4,049 physicians reporting the 9,489 pregnancies required inseminations varying in number from 1 to 72. Forty-five per cent of all pregnancies occurred in cases in which 12 inseminations were employed." [26] An improvement in the techniques employed would seem to be evidenced from a more recent report, which indicates that the average successful case requires only three to six treatments over a period of two to four months.[27]

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[25] Earle Marsh and Albert M. Vollmer, "Possible Psychogenic Aspects of Infertility," *Fertility and Sterility*, 1951, II, 70-79.

Also Boris B. Rubenstein, "An Emotional Factor in Infertility, A Psychosomatic Approach," *Fertility and Sterility*, 1951, II, 80-86.

[26] Frances I. Seymour and Alfred Koerner, "Artificial Insemination," *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, June 21, 1941, CXVI, 2747-49.

Approximately 97 per cent of all the pregnancies (9,489) resulting from the above artificial inseminations terminated in living, normal babies. This is a considerably superior achievement to that of normal pregnancies. Of this total group, two-thirds were effected by the use of the husband's semen, whereas one-third employed the semen of donors. It may be that artificial insemination, employing the husband's semen, will become increasingly common for cases of sterility in which some difficulty makes it impossible for the sperm to come into contact with the ovum.

The problem is much more complicated with the use of the semen of donors. Even granting that the strictest secrecy is maintained and high qualifications of donor semen are insisted upon, the psychological and emotional difficulties are obviously very great. Furthermore, the legal questions involved are far from settled.[28] In spite of these objections, however, the attitudes of the vast majority of the physicians who are members of the American Society for the Study of Sterility express unqualified approval.[29] The doctors themselves who are dealing with the frustrations of married couples by reason of their inability to have children seem to be convinced that the advantages to be gained from artificial insemination outweigh the legal and personal difficulties encountered.

The Period of Most Likely Fertility

In the diagnosis of sterility cases, it has become routine procedure to inquire into the sex habits of the partners. Clinicians report that they have often been able to cure what seemed to be sterility by a mere change in the sex habits of the individuals concerned. Although there is nothing comparable in the human to the periodicity of sex desire in the higher animal world, there does seem to be a variation in sex desire in the woman during the menstrual cycle. The periods of maximum desire appear to be those immediately following menstruation and immediately preceding the next menstruation. The time of least sex desire, on the other hand, seems to be the midpoint of the cycle.

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[27] Alan F. Guttmacher, John O. Haman, and John MacLeod, "The Use of Donors for Artificial Insemination, a Survey of Current Practices," *Fertility and Sterility*, 1950, I, 264-70.

[28] "Medicolegal Aspects of Artificial Insemination," *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, September 15, 1951, CXLVII, 250-53.

[29] Guttmacher, *et al., op. cit.*

Not so many years ago, the belief was widespread that the times in the cycle during which the wife was most likely to conceive coincided with the presumed periods of maximum sex desire. Today this belief has been completely reversed. It is now generally accepted that the most likely time for conception to take place is the period about the midpoint of the average (28± days) menstrual cycle. Hence it can readily be seen that, if a given couple has developed habits of avoidance at that particular time of month, there alone may lie the reason for their apparent sterility.[30]

The belief that conception is likely to occur near the time of the menstrual flow has persisted because the achievement of accurate scientific knowledge in this field is relatively recent. From the days of Soranus in the second century up to recent times, the idea of the great physician has been accepted that "to prevent conception . . . people should abstain from coitus at the times when we have indicated as especially dangerous, *that is, the time directly before and after menstruation.*" [31] The contemporary reversal of this tradition is the result of the various researches on the time of ovulation in women. Furthermore, it must be known how long after their release both spermatozoa and ova are capable of fertilization under bodily conditions. For the practical application of this knowledge in terms of two individuals, the variations in the regularity of the menstrual cycle of the woman over a period of months must be ascertained.

The stimulus to contemporary study of the time of ovulation in women was provided by the works of Hermann Knaus, Kyusaku Ogino, and Carl G. Hartman. Employing different techniques, these three scientists arrived at essentially similar results. The method used by Knaus was the observation of the behavior of the uterus in response to pituitary stimulation during the two phases of the menstrual cycle. He concluded that ovulation occurs on the fifteenth day (in an average cycle of twenty-eight days) prior to the next menstruation and that conception takes place within a five-day period surrounding the midpoint or fifteenth day.

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[30] Irving F. Stein, "Further Studies in Infertility and Sterility," *Surgery, Gynecology and Obstetrics*, December 1938, LXVII, 731-39.

[31] Norman E. Himes, *Medical History of Contraception* (Baltimore: The Williams and Wilkins Company, 1936), pp. 89-90. Our italics.

Ogino observed ninety-three cases of surgical operations involving the ovaries and concluded: (a) that no *corpus lutemu* appeared more than sixteen days prior to the next menstruation; and (b) that no unruptured follicle appeared later than twelve days before the next menstruation. He postulated the life of the sperm cell as three days. He then determined that ovulation took place between the limits of sixteen and twelve days prior to the next menstruation. Hence the fertile period in women was nineteen to twelve days prior to menstruation, or nine to sixteen days following the preceding menstruation.[32]

In his extensive work on the female monkey (rhesus), Hartman employed three methods: (a) palpation of the ovary; (b) limiting coitus to a single day in the cycle and observing whether or not conception and pregnancy followed therefrom; and (c) recovery of fertilized eggs and embryos. Two hundred cases of ovulation were studied by the method of palpation. Records were kept on 200 conceptions taking place as a result of timed coitus. From these results, Hartman concluded that in monkeys ovulation occurs not earlier than day 8 and not later than day 20 following the preceding menstruation.[33] If the behavior of the human female in this biological respect is similar to the female monkey, these findings are in effect corroborative of the Ogino-Knaus results.

Much additional research has been done to determine ovulation-time, and only brief mention can be made of these various lines of evidence. Basal body temperatures taken daily during the cycle reveal a pattern of low temperature during the follicular phase and then an abrupt change to a higher level. Ovulation is presumed to occur at the time of temperature shift from the low to the first high point.[34] Many women report midmenstrual pain (the Mittelschmerz) or slight bleeding, and this is regarded as associated with ovulation. Experiments have been conducted by means of a specially designed vacuum tube potentiometer for recording minute voltage changes. When done on rabbits, it was found that there was always an exact correlation between the number of electrical surges and the number of follicles ovulated.[35]

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[32] Kyusaku Ogino, *Conception Period in Women* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Medical Arts Publishing Company, 1934).

[33] Carl G. Hartman, *Time of Ovulation in Women* (Baltimore: The Williams and Wilkins Company, 1936).

[34] "Basal Temperature Charts," *Human Fertility*, September, 1945, X, 87-91.

See also Pendleton Tompkins, "The Use of Basal Temperature Graphs in Determining the Date of Ovulation," *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, March 11, 1944, CXXIV, 698-700.

W. T. Pommerenke, "Determining the Time of Ovulation by Basal Temperature and the Role of the Cervix in Fertility," *op. cit.*

Other studies have been made on changes in the endometrial lining of the uterus and on vaginal changes. Still others have been concerned with the cervical mucus, on the hypothesis that at the time of ovulation this mucus is increased in quantity, in fluidity, and in the amount of carbohydrate.[36] Finally, mention can be made of the rat ovarian hyperemia test, whereby observations are made on the induction of hyperemia in the ovaries of immature white rats following the injection of female urine taken on the presumed days of normal ovulation.[37]

The converging lines of evidence thus point to the fact that most women have a pattern of regularity of ovulation at or about the midpoint of the menstrual cycle. There are, however, still many unsettled questions. Reputable authorities are convinced that in *individual* cases ovulation (and conception) has been known to take place on every day of the cycle. This implies, if true, a wide limit of *individual* variability. Others believe that it is possible for an individual woman to experience more than one ovulation in a single cycle. Still others hold that traumatic ovulation has been known to occur in the human being. There seems to be evidence that "The average fertile woman ovulates normally about 85 per cent of the time, or 7 out of 8 cycles." [38]

Once the ovum has been released, what is the time limit of its fertilizability? How long will the sperm cells remain viable and capable of fertilizing the ovum after being deposited in the vaginal tract? Answers to these questions are exceedingly pertinent. Even if it be granted that the ovum is released at the midpoint of the menstrual cycle, the remaining two weeks would be a fertile period if the ovum remained capable of fertilization during that entire time. Some authorities hold that the fertilizing power of male gametes is almost two days, whereas others maintain that the sperm cells live less than a day and that the unfertilized ovum lives only a few hours. The general conclusion is that, although in isolated cases the human spermatozoa may live for more than a week, the period of male and female fertilizability is not more than three days.[39]

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[35] H. S. Burr, R. T. Hill, and Edgar Allen, "Detection of Ovulation in the Intact Rabbit," *Proceedings of the Society for Experimental Biology and Medicine*, October 1935, XXXIII, 109-11.

[36] Pommerenke, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

[37] Edmond J. Farris, "Temperature Compared with Rat Test for Prediction of Human Ovulation," *Journal of the American Medical Association*, October 23, 1948, CXXXVIII, 560-63.

[38] Edmond J. Farris, "A Formula for Selecting the Optimum Time for Conception," *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*, May 1952, LXIII, 1145.

The summary of the research data supplied by Pearl is in essential agreement. He tabulated the conclusions of fourteen authorities as to the duration of the potentiality of fertilization of human germ cells in uterus and tubes. With respect to spermatozoa, the estimates ranged from two hours to seventy-two hours. In the case of the ovum, they varied from several hours to forty-eight hours. "It was formerly thought," he concludes, "that ova and spermatozoa kept alive in a state of sound activity for long periods of time after they had been shed from the gonads into the female genital tract. Recent advances in knowledge have greatly altered this view." [40]

The Period of Least Likely Fertility

Women, as a general rule, ovulate about halfway between the onset of the menses. Both spermatozoa and ova apparently have an outside limit of fertilizability of three days. It follows that, shortly after ovulation through the succeeding menstrual period to a time several days in advance of the next ovulation, the probability of conception passes through a minimum. This may be called the relatively sterile period of the cycle or the *period of least likely fertility*. By contrast, the days surrounding and including the time of ovulation may be called the *period of most likely fertility*. For the practical application of this theory, the crucial factor is the midpoint of the menstrual cycle. The final consideration is therefore the length and regularity of the menstrual cycle.

If accurate calendars were kept by 10,000 women, recording for a series of months the date on which menstruation began, it would be found that the average duration of the cycle would be some 28 days. When the term "menstrual cycle" is used, therefore, the norm or statistical average of 28 days thus comes to mind. There is, however, considerable variation among the 10,000 women, ranging all the way from some who have a reasonable reguarlity of 21 days to others with a cycle of 33 days or even longer.

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[39] Irving F. Stein and Melvin R. Cohen, "An Evaluation of the Safe Period," *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, January 22, 1938, CX, 257-61.

[40] Pearl, *The Natural History of Population*, pp. 66-67.

More important, however, is the conclusion of gynecologists that the most significant aspect of the so-called regularity of the menstrual cycle is its *irregularity*. The insistence of the patients that their menses come with absolute regularity is soon demonstrated to be fallacious when they keep a calendar for several months on which they record the date of the onset of menstruation. Much to their surprise, variations of several days will occur. Psychic and emotional disturbances, traumas, fears of pregnancy, worries and anxieties, changes of residence, occupation, or climate—these and countless other situations can effect a marked fluctuation in the incidence of menstruation.

So well established has knowledge of the normal irregularity become that gynecologists generally ask for menstrual calendars to be kept by their patients over a period of eight to twelve months. The examination of such a calendar can establish the pattern of menstruation for a given individual. On the assumption that this pattern will continue to operate without serious fluctuations, the midpoint of the cycle can be located. For example, if the physician is acting on the assumption that ovulation occurs fourteen days before the next bleeding, this would mean that the patient with the cycle of twenty-eight days would ovulate on the fourteenth day following the preceding menstruation. On the other hand, the patient with the twenty-one day cycle would ovulate on the seventh day, and one with a thirty-five day cycle ovulates on the twenty-first day following the preceding flow. Making whatever allowances are necessary on account of irregularities revealed by the calendar, the physician can then indicate the days during which the patient is most likely to conceive and those during which conception probably will not occur.[41]

Many doctors are convinced of the validity of the period of least likely fertility (popularly known as the rhythm method) as a contraceptive technique. Others are skeptical by reason of some of the contradictory evidence surrounding the scientific conclusions on which it is based. All agree, however, that it is indispensable to know the individual menstrual pattern, with its relationship to the possible time of ovulation, if the method is to succeed at all.

[41] Victor C. Pedersen, *Nature's Way* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1934).

The Physiology of Contraception

Contraception has an obvious importance in determining and coloring the various forms of marital interaction. We have considered marriage in terms of the social roles that set the general pattern for this important relationship. The most basic of these roles affected by the practice or nonpractice of contraception (in whatever form) is the affectional role, which plays such a central part in contemporary marriage. The biological role is intimately affected by the decision to have children or to refrain from so doing, at least during the initial years of marriage. The conjugal roles are likewise influenced by attitudes and practices regarding contraception, inasmuch as the nature of the marital relationship changes with the birth of children.

The economic roles, relating both to production and consumption of family income, are also closely tied to the general problem of contraception. The family in which the wife continues to work, and the couple practices contraception, makes one type of economic adjustment. The couple with several children perforce makes another type of adjustment. The size and general economic status of the family tend to be closely related to the attitudes of the spouses concerning the artificial limitation of conception. Finally, the health adjustments of many couples are directly conditioned by their behavior in respect to contraception. Some wives are chronically ill or disabled because of continued childbirth when their income does not warrant it. Others suffer permanent injury following illegal abortion. By eliminating or mitigating many of these dangers, contraception has introduced important modifications in the health relationships of the contemporary family.

Contraception is concerned with any measures to prevent the union of sperm and ovum. The "rhythm method" is the only method which the Catholic Church allows under the natural law. This method is based upon the differential availability of the female ovum, as described above. For centuries man has practiced *coitus interruptus* (withdrawal) or *coitus reservatus* to prevent the deposition of the male sperm cells in the vaginal cavity. Most modern contraceptives represent: (a) a mechanical obstruction to the meeting of sperm and ovum; (b) a chemical agent acting as a spermicide; (c) a combination of both mechanical and chemical means.

Illustrative of the mechanical devices are the male condom or sheath, the female sponge, tampon, vaginal diaphragm, cervical caps, as well as such intracervical and intrauterine contraptions as stems, buttons, "wishbones," and rings.[42] The chemical spermicides may be used in douche solutions or in commercially prepared jellies, creams, suppositories, foams, and other media. Many clinics make use of a combination of the vaginal diaphragm and a spermicidal jelly.

In a treatment such as this, it would be presumptuous to discuss the merits of or to make specific recommendations relative to contemporary contraceptive methods. Two elementary principles, however, have been generally accepted and may be stated here: (1) Each married couple should decide for themselves whether or not to use contraceptives in any form. If the decision is in favor of such practice, they should then consult the proper person concerning the measures best adapted to their individual desires and temperaments. (2) The public has come to accept the notion that the proper person to consult is the physician. Too much is involved in health and safety for people any longer to be content with the lurid literature on contraception or with attractive advertisements aimed at promoting "feminine hygiene." The doctors have accepted their recent release from legal restrictions with such intelligent restraint that married couples should avail themselves of scientific information in this important field if they so desire it.

The Menopause

It is appropriate to conclude the discussion of the physiological aspects of marital interaction with a brief commentary on that period which marks the end of female reproductive power. The initial menstruation (menarche) is the external evidence of the completion of the maturation of the female sex organs and hence the beginning of the capacity to reproduce. By the same token, irregular menstruation, culminating in its complete cessation, is the outward sign that the reproductive cycle has come to an end (the menopause). "About one half of all women cease menstruating between 45 and 50," says an authority in this field, "about one quarter stop before 45 and another quarter continue to menstruate until past 50." [43] Pregnancy after the age of 47 is very rare and parturition after age 52 has not been validated.[44]

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[42] Abraham Stone and Norman E. Himes, *Planned Parenthood, a Practical Guide to Birth Control Methods* (New York: The Viking Press, 1951).

[43] Nicholson J. Eastman, *Williams Obstetrics*, 10th ed. (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1950), p. 101.

It should be occasion for no surprise that ovarian atrophy and associated changes bring about a crisis in the life-cycle of the woman. There is certain to be instability in the endocrine balance and the autonomic nervous system. The so-called "hot flashes" are symptoms of these inner changes; increased nervousness and irritability seem to be natural accompaniments. It has frequently been noted, however, that farmers' wives and other married women who have a strenuous work-life or absorbing interests pass through "change of life" with little difficulty, compared to wives who have the leisure to think about their ills.

This is not to minimize the importance of the somatic changes, for they are indeed great. It is rather to emphasize the importance of psychosomatic factors in the situation. Much success in recent years has been achieved in overcoming the difficulties of this period by the use of a suitable estrogen. The function of this practice has been stated as follows: "The hormone serves as a substitute for the ovaries and temporarily alleviates the disturbances until the body becomes able to adapt itself to a new endocrine balance." [45]

It is still a moot question as to whether or not the male experiences anything comparable to the female climacteric. While katabolism will certainly win in the race with anabolism, and male bodily vigor will inevitably decline, there is no complete atrophy of gonadal functioning such as the woman experiences. Some persons, however, while admitting that spermatogenesis continues, maintain that physiological and endocrinological changes do occur in the male. These changes represent a transitional stage in the life of the individual, even though this transition is less dramatic and less difficult.

Psychosomatic factors are also important in the experience of the male as he reaches the same approximate time as the female climacteric. He may feel that his life has passed its peak, that his vitality and interest in living are drawing to a close, and that, in some subtle way, life has passed him by. These and other psychological reactions, whether consciously expressed or buried deep in his unconscious, may contribute to various physical symptoms in the man.[46] His role in marital interaction may undergo a corresponding change.

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[44] James W. Newell and John Rock, "Upper Age Limit of Parturition," *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*, April 1952, LXIII, 875-76.

[45] Turner, *General Endocrinology*, p. 410.

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[46] August A. Werner, "Sex Behavior and Problems of the Climacteric," *Successful Marriage,* eds. Morris Fishbein and Ernest W. Burgess (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1947), chap. 5, especially pp. 480-84.

13

FACTORS IN MARITAL SUCCESS

In this section, we have examined the marital relationship. We have been concerned with both its physiological and its social aspects. We have seen that marriage is a social relationship in two senses: (a) it is conducted by two human beings who have been socialized in a given culture pattern; (b) it is conducted under patterned forms of social expectations, which are known as social roles. These social expectations are an important part of the marriage process. They set the standards to which the husband and wife ordinarily conform, and they also embody the norms whereby the marriage is defined. The roles of husband and wife contain certain implicit standards of performance. If the marriage appears to be living up to these standards, it is judged a success. If it appears to be violating these standards, it is something less than a success.[1]

The Traditional Nature of Marital Success

Marital success is ordinarily defined in terms of the criteria that have become incorporated in the conventional social roles. A marriage is often considered a success (or at least not a failure) provided it is not disrupted by desertion or divorce. This is the most conventional of all definitions of marital success and reflects the religious conception of marriage and the family, which places permanence as the fundamental characteristic. In a society that sets a high premium upon romantic love and marital happiness, mere permanence leaves something to be desired as a basic criterion of marital success. We shall discuss this factor in more detail below. We merely indicate here that permanence is the criterion that has the strongest weight of convention, religious authority, and popular acceptance.

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[1] For an extremely stimulating discussion of marital success, see Willard Waller, *The Family*, rev. Reuben Hill (New York: The Dryden Press, 1951), chap. 17, "Marital Success."

Other elements comprise the conventional definition of marital success. The presence or absence of children is widely viewed as next in importance to permanence as the criterion of a successful marriage. This conception reflects the ancient biblical admonition to be fruitful and multiply, and it underscores the assumption that the primary purpose of marriage is to have children. Another definition of marital success reflects the values of middle-class society, namely, upward mobility and material acquisition. The successful marriage is thus the one in which the husband has gained economic advancement, and the family has been able to rise in the socio-economic scale.

Closely allied to this attitude is the one that regards the successful marriage primarily in terms of consumer durable goods. In this sense, the successful marriage is the one in which the husband is a good provider who can produce automobiles, radios, television sets, washing machines, and all the rest of the tangible evidences of the good life. In still other terms, successful marriage depends upon conformity to the conventional standards of the community, wherein both the husband and wife play the roles expected of them in the middle-class culture.[2]

These are some of the criteria that come immediately to mind. Success in marriage is a subjective matter, which depends upon the definitions of the participants and the general public. The conception of the self is based in large part upon the conception which others have (or are believed to have) toward the self. Hence the very fact that permanence, children, vertical mobility, material success, and conventionality are widely viewed as fundamental to marital success tends in part to make them so. In addition to these conventional factors, however, there are other criteria that reflect the contemporary society, with its emerging values of freedom, happiness, and development of the personality.

The Changing Criteria of Marital Success

One such criterion involves the adequacy of the marital role-playing and the mutual enjoyment which the husband and wife derive therefrom. The husband and wife function not so much as isolated individuals as participants in a pattern of mutual expectations. The measure of marital success might well reflect the progress the husband and wife are making as *a pair*. Cooperation is an important criterion of marital success and cooperation, by definition, requires more than one person.

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[2] Cf. Ernest W. Burgess and Harvey J. Locke, *The Family* (New York: American Book Company, 1945), p. 435.

The husband who progresses in his role of husband, as distinguished from his other roles, might thus be the one who becomes steadily more "domesticated." In this role, he would be less concerned with his own gratification and more concerned with the social activities he can perform with his wife. Conversely, the successful wife would be increasingly content to stay home and function in her role of confidant, provider of affection, and emotional refuge from the tribulations of the world. The marriage relationship involves the *shared* behavior of two persons. The degree to which each individual functions in this unique relationship constitutes an important indication of the success of the marriage.[3]

Some of the newer criteria of marital success are directly opposed to the conventional values that have come down more or less intact from an earlier day. Others merely supplement the traditional expectations. Both groups of elements should be considered when assessing the complex question of marital success. The newer criteria of marital success are clearly more difficult to measure. It is, for example, easy to measure whether or not a given marriage is still legally functioning. The number of children is likewise a convenient device for estimating the degree of success in the conventional sense. When we come to such intangibles as happiness or the maximum possible development of personality, however, we immediately encounter difficulties of measurement and evaluation. Despite these complications, however, any complete and realistic consideration of marital success must include such elusive criteria.

The changing definitions introduce other complications into an over-all evaluation of family success. Some of these considerations involve insight into the nature of personality and hence do not readily occur to many persons. The "successful" family, for example, in popular literature is pictured as containing little or no conflict, with both members acting in accordance with middle-class standards, and with many of the tangible manifestations of material success. But this is only one side of the coin. The "successful" family is also pictured in the psychiatric literature as the source of the frustrations, insecurities, and emotional deprivations that bring about many of the neuroses of the middle class.[4] In other words, the family that is successful by conventional standards is the same family, it is alleged, that generates a variety of tensions that stultify the personalities of its members. It should be emphasized that this is not the maladjusted or disorganized family, but rather the family that fulfills the conventional middle-class standards.[5]

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[3] Leland H. Stott, "The Problem of Evaluating Family Success," *Marriage and Family Living*, Fall 1951, XIII, 149-53.

This critique of the stereotyped conception of marital success clearly raises a number of questions that are vital to an understanding of the family in our society. If the marriage that is adjusted in terms of the expectations of the community is still productive of frustration and instability, then it appears that the whole problem might well be re-examined. In terms of the democratic creed, marriage exists for the personalities of its members and not vice versa. The family also exists in the American culture pattern, with its emphasis upon the struggle for status, regardless of the possible stultification of personality. These questions clearly cannot be answered here, for they involve fundamental moral judgments concerning the role of the family and the validity of the basic social values. The definition of success in marriage involves a variety of criteria upon which there may exist a legitimate difference of opinion.[6]

The difficulties inherent in the conventional definitions of marital success are discussed by Reuben Hill in his revision of Willard Waller's treatise on the contemporary family. In place of the traditional conceptions, Hill offers a dynamic concept which he calls "developmental adjustment" and which includes such criteria as integration, companionship, adjustment, satisfaction, and personality development. He regards these factors as consistent with the democratic goals of our society, with its insistence upon the maximum development of the individual personality. He views such traditional criteria as permanence and conformity to middle-class expectations as sometimes stultifying to personality development. The concept of "adjustment" as advanced by Hill includes "an evaluation of behavior on the basis of cultural standards . . . a good working arrangement with reality, adulthood, and expectations of others." The concept "developmental" is viewed in terms of "a combination of growth forces resident within the personality which seek expression" and which change as the individual progresses through the successive phases of the marriage cycle.[7]

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[4] Cf. Arnold W. Green, "The Middle-Class Male Child and Neurosis," *American Sociological Review*, February 1946, XI, 31-41.

[5] William L. Kolb, "Sociologically Established Family Norms and Democratic Values," *Social Forces*, May 1948, XXVI, 451-56.

[6] *Ibid.*

In his discussion of the implications of this concept, Hill suggests certain criteria that, in his judgment, characterize a successful marriage. In abbreviated form, these criteria are as follows:

1. The love sentiment is exclusively directed at the mate.
2. The relationship is marked by mutual accommodation.
3. The married pair conceive of their relationship as an entity.
4. The relationship provides emotional security to both parties.
5. The marriage provides a desirable background for raising children.
6. The ego demands of husband and wife are satisfactorily met.
7. The economic basis of the marriage is adequate.
8. The marriage provides ample opportunity for individual developments which do not threaten the pair relationship.[8]

Marriage thus may mean many things to many men. To some it means permanence, to others companionship, to others material success, and to still others children. In addition to these traditional criteria, marriage may mean happiness, the growth of personality, and the enlargement of emotional experience. When there is no consensus on the goals of marriage, agreement is difficult on the degree to which these goals are or can be realized. Hence no discussion of marital success can satisfy everyone. The following statement, therefore, makes no claim either to universality or omniscience. We merely indicate some of the factors that bear some relationship to the problem. Among these elements are happiness, sexual adjustment, and economic adequacy.[9] We shall conclude with a brief discussion of the prediction of marital success.

Happiness and Marital Success

The cult of happiness is an important element in the American culture pattern. The search for happiness is a characteristic goal of our society from childhood to old age. In the preliminaries to marriage, happiness is a basic consideration. Dating is, ideally, a perfect manifestation of the cult of happiness, since dating is an end in itself that is closely related to happiness. Furthermore, dating, in theory at least, involves no responsibility on either side and the participants are expected to have a sense of obligation to nobody.

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[7] Waller, *The Family*, pp. 361-70.

[8] *Ibid.*, pp. 368-69.

[9] Cf. also Leland H. Stott, "The Problem of Evaluating Family Success," *op. cit.*

Courtship carries the quest for happiness one step farther, for it is a preliminary search for a companion in marriage who will insure the permanent happiness of both parties. Marriage itself is, finally, dedicated to the pursuit of happiness. If this emotion is not forthcoming to the extent the spouses believe desirable, many persons assume that the marriage should be dissolved and the search begun with another partner. At all stages in life, happiness is an important measure of the success or failure of marriage.

The belief in happiness in marriage is a comparatively recent cultural development. It is in large part an American, or at least an Anglo-Saxon, phenomenon. The idea that marriage exists primarily for the happiness of the participants would seem strange to the majority of people throughout the world today. Yet this insistence upon individual happiness is the most conventional doctrine to the modern American, young or old. It is something he takes for granted, one of the mores that are so self-evident that they are not even discussed.

Such a philosophy was far from the thoughts of the Church Fathers who held that marriage is a sacrament, indissoluble for life. Individual happiness was ephemeral, marriage was permanent, and they made no bones about it. Under these conditions, husband and wife did not expect to find happiness in marriage. When they got mutual respect and companionship, they were satisfied. When they got less than that, they suffered in silence. They did not go to the divorce courts.

Many contemporary Americans, however, believe that the individual has an inalienable right to happiness in marriage. Failing to attain this happiness for reasons beyond their control, many persons seek solace in the divorce courts and afterward try again for the perfect partner. These persons fail to realize that marriage is a prolonged and complicated relationship between two persons who have grown up under different surroundings, with different family backgrounds, different attitudes toward money, economic success, and all the other possible divergences of a heterogeneous culture. One of the few attitudes they probably share is the belief in happiness in marriage. This belief is hardly capable of keeping the marriage going when other common elements are lacking. Happiness is a frail reed upon which to rest an institutional relationship.

Happiness in marriage is an acquired need. It does not appear to be present in other societies, where the goals of marriage reflect other values. The fact that a given need is acquired rather than innate, however, does not mean that individuals seek any less eagerly to gratify it. The needs which two persons may seek, consciously or unconsciously, to gratify in marriage may range all the way from the need to be dominated to the need to receive sympathy.[10] Among these varied factors, however, the need to be loved and hence to be happy is basic in our society. The individual has been culturally conditioned to experience this need, which in many ways is the expected outcome of romantic love. Happiness in marriage is pictured partly in terms of romantic love, and the search for this assurance may color the emotional life from adolescence to old age. The satisfaction of this wish becomes of central importance to the psyche.

There have been several attempts to measure happiness in marriage.[11] The general procedure of these studies has been to secure data from married couples on their cultural backgrounds and personality traits. These data are then related to the degree of happiness of the marriage, as judged both by the spouses themselves and by outsiders who know them both well. The difficulties of such a procedure are obvious, whether conducted by the participants or outsiders. First, the definition of happiness varies, and two spouses may have widely divergent conceptions of marital happiness in general and their own happiness in particular. Second, it is difficult even for close friends to know the exact emotional status of a marriage, for the spouses often keep their doubts and frustrations to themselves and outwardly play the conventional role of happily married persons. Despite these and other admitted complications, the various studies have contributed greatly to an understanding of marital happiness.[12]

[10] For an original and thoughtful analysis of marriage in these terms, see Robert F. Winch, *The Modern Family* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1952), chap. 15, "Companionship Love and Marriage: The Theory of Complementary Needs."

[11] For a summary of many of these efforts, see Clifford Kirkpatrick, *What Science Says about Happiness in Marriage* (Minneapolis: Burgess Publishing Company, 1947).

[12] Lewis M. Terman and Winifred B. Johnson, "Methodology and Results of Recent Studies in Marital Adjustment," *American Sociological Review*, June 1939, IV, 307-24.

We may briefly discuss some of the representative attempts to measure this elusive but important factor.

1. *The Terman Study.* The first of these studies was conducted by Lewis M. Terman and associates.[13] They did not attempt to measure happiness directly, but instead sought the background factors which would contribute to marital adjustment. The background factors which Terman regarded as most crucial to success were: (a) superior happiness of parents; (b) childhood happiness; (c) lack of conflict with mother; (d) home discipline that was firm, not harsh; (e) strong attachment to mother; (f) strong attachment to father; (g) lack of conflict with father; (h) parental frankness on matters of sex; (i) infrequency and mildness of childhood punishment; (j) premarital attitude toward sex that was free from disgust or aversion.[14]

2. *The Burgess-Cottrell Study.* This study was based upon the self-rating of 526 couples of predominantly middle-class background.[15] The authors found that happiness in marriage appeared to be closely related to such matters as lack of conflict with father and mother, strong emotional attachment to both parents, and superior happiness of the parental union. In addition, certain other items were found to be important, such as the premarital employment records of husband and wife, church attendance, membership in organizations, and friends. There were significant differences in the findings of the two studies, and some factors that seemed to have an important bearing upon marital happiness in one did not have the same effect in the other. The amount of agreement, however, is more significant than the differences. Both studies strongly indicate that the environment of the parental family is very important in fashioning the type of personality that will be capable of satisfactory adjustments (and thus, by inference, of happiness) in marriage.[16]

3. *The Popenoe-Wicks Study.* The importance of the parental environment in producing happiness in marital adjustment is further borne out in a study of marital happiness in two generations.[17] Po-

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[13] Terman *et al.*, *Psychological Factors in Marital Happiness* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1938).

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 372.

[15] Ernest W. Burgess and Leonard S. Cottrell, Jr., *Predicting Success or Failure in Marriage* (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1939).

[16] *Ibid.*, chaps. 17 and 18.

[17] Paul Popenoe and Donna Wicks, "Marital Happiness in Two Generations," *Mental Hygiene*, April 1937, XXI, 218-23.

penoe and Wicks examined the records of 754 husbands and wives who consulted the American Institute of Family Relations in Los Angeles. They found that about 45 per cent of the individuals came from unhappy family backgrounds. Since the very fact that they came to the Institute indicated that they were having difficulties, it might be expected that a large proportion would have family backgrounds that were not conducive to later marital success. When this group was compared with another control group, it was found that 67 per cent of the marriages from happy homes turned out "happily" and 43 per cent of those from unhappy homes turned out "unhappily." Marital success is dependent upon a variety of factors, of which the family of orientation is only one. It appears, nevertheless, that this factor is important.

4. *The Locke Study.* In this study, the author approached the problem of happiness in marriage in terms of two groups.[18] The first comprised marriages that were happy, as judged by relatives, friends, and acquaintances, and the second comprised marriages that ended in divorce. This study represents a significant departure from others, since it involves couples that were already divorced and hence, by definition, are adjudged unhappy. Most other studies have been based upon a sample of married persons, divided into two groups of adjusted and maladjusted on the basis of marital-adjustment tests. Locke concludes that "Marital adjustment ranges along a continuum from very great to very little adjustment. Happiness in marriage, as judged by an outsider, represents adjustment, and divorce represents maladjustment." [19]

Sexual Adjustment and Marital Success

We turn from "happiness" as a criterion of success in marriage to "sexual adjustment," which is also widely regarded as a measure of this desired condition. The sex act has become the symbol of complete marital union. In recent years, there has been a widespread emancipation from the prudery that formerly characterized the treatment of such matters. This emancipation has been accompanied by considerable discussion of sexual adjustment, sexual compatibility, and sexual incompatibility in marriage.[20] Many persons have gone so far as to maintain that the sexual element is the *most* important factor in marital success and that without an adequate (or even an extremely happy) sexual adjustment the marriage is an unsatisfactory relationship.

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[18] Harvey J. Locke, *Predicting Adjustment in Marriage* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1951).

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 358.

We wish to enter a demurrer to this statement. The position of this book is that sexual gratification, in its restricted sense, is only one of a number of factors in marital success. The statement of Terman appears to summarize the matter very adequately. "The sexologist is not wholly wrong," he says, "but it is pretty certain that his emphasis has been overdone. There is more to marriage than the sexual embrace." [21] Although sex relationships in marriage may indeed provide great mutual satisfaction, this is not the essence of marital success. Most of the hours spent together, especially during the middle and later years, have no relationship whatever to sexual gratification, unless that term is so extended as to become meaningless. The mutual pleasure symbolized by the sex act is an important element in marital interaction. Other and more tranquil pleasures, however, are more important in the long run.[22]

The information available on sex relationships in marriage was extremely fragmentary prior to the appearance of the Kinsey report.[23] This study provided considerable specific information, drawn from different social classes. Kinsey reported that practically 100 per cent of the males of all social levels engage in sex relations with their wives, although the nature and frequency of these relations vary on the basis of age, class, religion, education, rural and urban residence, and other factors. The sexual relationship in marriage is a function of the entire personality, which in turn is the product of a variety of biological and cultural factors.

Kinsey also demonstrated that the social levels have widely different attitudes and practices in such sexual matters as the amount and variety of stimulation prior to coitus, the role of the wife in anticipating and encouraging sexual relations, and the importance of sex as an end in itself, as distinguished from a means to the end of procreation. The several social levels have divergent definitions of sexual normality, decency, and hygiene, and behavior that is accepted and even encouraged on one level may be virtually taboo on another. Social class thus plays an important role in determining sex relations in marriage.[24]

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[20] Cf. G. V. Hamilton and Kenneth Macgowan, *What Is Wrong With Marriage?* (New York: Albert and Charles Boni, 1929).

[21] Terman, *Psychological Factors in Marital Happiness*, p. 247.

[22] Cf. Burgess and Cottrell, *Predicting Success or Failure in Marriage*, chap. 12, "The Sexual Factor."

[23] Alfred C. Kinsey, et al., *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Company, 1948), chap. 18, "Marital Intercourse."

Sexual relationships also involve social roles. The essence of the marital role is its reciprocity, whereby behavior is conditioned not only by the individual's conception of his own behavior but equally by the behavior he has been conditioned to expect from the other. Each individual must therefore adapt his behavior to the expectations of the spouse. If this adaptation occurs with comparatively little friction, the marriage may be considered a success. If this adaptation is marred by widely divergent expectations of the partners, the entire relationship may be jeopardized. The definition of the sexual role is an expression of the personality of the individual. Conflict on the sexual level therefore *symbolizes* other personality differences. It is this symbolic quality of the sexual relationship, rather than its importance per se, that renders it important in marital success.[25]

We are concerned in this chapter with adjustment in marriage and hence with the factors making for success. In a later chapter, we shall examine the other side of the equation—namely, those sexual factors making for marital maladjustment, frustration, and disorganization. The success of the sexual role is largely determined by psychological, rather than physiological, factors. Comparatively few wives, for example, are frigid solely because of *physical* reasons, whereas many wives experience such difficulties, in varying degrees, because of *attitudinal* complications. Attitudes with respect to sexual relationships constitute part of the personality of the husband and the wife. We may examine some of the attitudes that determine the successful operation of the sexual role.

1. *Agreement.* A common attitude concerning the place of sex in marriage is perhaps the most important single element in this adjustment. The traditional position of the Church has been that sex is primarily important for procreation and that any other manifestations are secondary. This attitude is currently in the process of change,

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[24] *Ibid.*, chap. 18.

[25] Harriet R. Mowrer, *Personality Adjustment and Domestic Discord* (New York: American Book Company, 1935), p. 151.

but wide differences still exist between religious groups and social levels in this respect. When husband and wife agree as to the role of sex in marriage, they have made the most important step toward adjustment on this level.

2. *Desire.* A second pattern of attitudes important to success in this relationship involves the question of sexual desire. A discrepancy is also apparent here between the traditional and the contemporary attitudes. The former assumption was that sexual enjoyment was a masculine monopoly and that desire and gratification were experienced only by women who were beyond the moral pale. The realization that women as well as men derive pleasure from the sexual embrace in marriage is comparatively new and is more common among the educated than the uneducated classes. Consensus on this level is likewise important to marital success.

3. *Reciprocity.* A third and closely related cluster of attitudes comprises the mutual understanding of the emotions of the spouses. The husband should understand the nature of the sexual response in the wife and should respect the reactions of his spouse. When the sexual act is conducted in these reciprocal terms, it is more satisfactory for both parties. Social roles and sexual relationships alike are two-sided in their operation. In a patriarchal and masculine-dominated world, the husband has traditionally sought his own pleasure with little consideration for the wife.

The various studies of marital adjustment have placed the sexual aspects of marital success in perspective. Even broadly defining sex as including the related aspects of the response pattern, Terman concluded that all these factors combined did not comprise the most important factor in marital happiness. In his study, a variety of behavior patterns closely associated with the sex factor were correlated with marital happiness and were found to have only a minor relationship thereto. Among the factors having only a slight correlation with marital happiness were "reported and preferred frequency of intercourse, estimated duration of intercourse . . . methods of contraception used, distrust of contraceptives, fear of pregnancy . . . wife's history of sex shock, rhythm in wife's sexual desire. . . ." [26]

Burgess and Cottrell discovered that conflicts apparently grounded in sexual incompatibility are in reality products of attitudes and values wholly or partially unrelated to sex as such. The life organization of each spouse, his early attitudes, his values regarding sex, and his definition of its importance in his life—these elements are related to adjustment in marriage, since they determine the emotional reactions with regard to sex. These reactions are clearly more complicated than the mere physiological aspects of the sex act. Adjustment or maladjustment in sex relationships, in short, reflects the early life in the family of orientation, plus the later contact with other cultural forces.[27]

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[26] Terman, *et al., Psychological Factors in Marital Happiness*, p. 373.

In the Locke study, certain factors were found to be positively correlated with marital adjustment. These factors were likewise primarily based on social attitudes, rather than the actual experience of the physical relationship as such. Among the items associated with adjustment (success) in marriage were the following: (a) a certain degree ("but not very much") of shyness in sexual matters; (b) approximately the same degree of interest in sex relations; (c) belief that the spouse enjoyed sex relations; (d) agreement with spouse on frequency of sex relations; (e) no desire for sex relations with person other than the spouse; (f) belief that the spouse had no extramarital relations; (g) lack of jealousy if the spouse associated with members of the opposite sex (but without sex relationships). These data further suggest that common attitudes concerning sexual behavior are important in marital adjustment. Successful adjustment arises from consensus, as the husband and wife agree on this central element in the marital equation.[28]

Economic Factors and Marital Success

In a recent study of marital adjustment, it was found that sex relations took the longest time to work out satisfactorily. The second most prolonged field of adjustment was spending money.[29] In our economy, where the majority of families receive an income largely or wholly in cash, the allocation of this income between the various competing goods and services becomes of prime importance. Consensus on these and other aspects of the consumption function is a basic prerequisite of marital success.

Economic factors involve the roles of husband and wife. The definitions of equality between the spouses, the gainful employment of the wife, and the values important to the family are all related to the economic role. Like the sexual factor, however, economic considerations do not appear in isolation in family adjustment or maladjustment. If there is agreement in other relationships, economic problems will ordinarily lend themselves to accord. Consensus on this level symbolizes consensus on other levels. In a democratic society, economic decisions have been increasingly brought into the realm of discussion and hence have become sources of agreement or disagreement.

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[27] Burgess and Cottrell, *Predicting Success or Failure in Marriage*, chap. 12.

[28] Locke, *Predicting Adjustment in Marriage*, pp. 156-57.

[29] Judson T. Landis, "Length of Time Required to Achieve Adjustment in Marriage," *American Sociological Review*, December 1946, XI, 666-77.

In the Terman study, the subjects were asked to check the grievances they had experienced in marriage but which did not interfere with their happiness. Considerable correspondence was found between both spouses regarding the ten grievances most frequently complained of; seven of the first ten in the husbands' list were also found in the first ten of the wives' list. Insufficient income was first on both lists. In spite of this fact, however, the correlation between marital happiness and actual income was approximately zero for both husbands and wives. A possible explanation for this discrepancy between the complaint frequency and the lack of correlation between income and happiness is that "insufficient" income (however defined) is often a rationalization of other more basic difficulties. Income as such does not appear to be related to marital success. At the same time, however, management and distribution of the family income are important factors in marital success.[30]

The Burgess and Cottrell study demonstrated that economic factors were closely related to other factors, such as psychogenic traits, cultural similarities, and patterns of affection in marital happiness. When these factors were held constant, the correlation between economic items alone and marital happiness was negligible.[31] In the Locke study, various economic items were positively associated with marital adjustment. Among them were: (a) economic security, as measured by insurance savings; (b) regularity of employment of husband; (c) "adequate" housing, as measured by rent; (d) interest in the home and its furnishings, as measured by the ownership of an electric refrigerator, an electric washing machine, and a radio; (e) a belief that the income was adequate to meet the family needs.[32]

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[30] Terman, *Psychological Factors in Marital Happiness*, pp. 169 ff.

[31] Burgess and Cottrell, *Predicting Success or Failure in Marriage*, pp. 136-58.

[32] Harvey J. Locke, *Predicting Adjustment in Marriage*, p. 297.

These are matters of consensus on the distribution of the family income, rather than the actual amount thereof. The definition of adequacy is a matter of opinion. Locke found that many of the families in his sample were living on a level far below that of the minimum standard of health and decency in the United States.[33] These families were happy, however, despite their extreme poverty. Other families had incomes that would be considered fabulous by the same standards but still believed that they did not have enough. Some of the variables entering into such a definition of income adequacy are: (a) the type of community; (b) the region; (c) the social and economic class; (d) the consumption patterns formed in the parental family; (e) the occupation of the husband; (f) the knowledge (or lack of it) of household management.

Only the most general observations can be made as to who shall handle the money and what are the most successful methods for so doing. Where both husband and wife are gainfully employed, the distinction between "mine" and "thine" cannot be made without jeopardizing an essentially joint enterprise. Where the husband is the sole earner, the wife should know the precise facts concerning the nature and amount of the income. Where the income is fixed, such knowledge offers no great problem. Where the income is variable, as in the case of some business and professional men, other difficulties arise. Only by joint understanding can family adjustment be maintained. Complete ignorance of the income of the husband, leading to the failure to curb extravagant desires, is often a contributing factor in marital maladjustment.

In some socio-economic groups, it is common practice for the husband to hand over his weekly pay envelope to the wife for her sole management. The husband then receives a small allowance for personal needs. In other groups, the husband retains a partial control of the purse strings by paying the fixed charges (rent, taxes, insurance, and the like) and at the same time grants to the wife a certain proportion of the income for food, clothing, household, and personal needs. This practice may contribute to marital adjustment because of the gratification of the ego arising from participation in a common enterprise. Still other groups maintain a joint checking account, which also enhances the sense of partnership in marriage. This practice promotes an understanding of the economic position of the family that is important in marital accord.

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[33] *Ibid.*, pp. 280-83.

We shall consider family consumption in chapter 16, which deals with the changing economic functions. We are concerned here with the allocation of the family income as related to marital accord. A large proportion (perhaps as much as 85 per cent) of the everyday purchases of the household items are made by the wife. The consumer goods industries realize this fact and direct the bulk of their advertising at the wife. Many years ago, Wesley C. Mitchell called attention to the "backward art of spending money" in connection with this role of the wife.[34]

An important factor in marital success is the aptitude, intelligence, and information brought to bear on this aspect of home management. It is clearly impossible for the wife to be a specialist in drugs, household appliances, diet and food values, and scientific marketing. It is possible, however, to attain a relative degree of efficiency with a reasonable amount of attention and study, aided by reports of government agencies, study groups, and consumer research organizations.

The Prediction of Marital Success

We have considered some of the principal factors making for success in marriage. Personal happiness, sexual adjustment, and economic consensus are among the criteria of success in the complex personal equation of marriage. Other factors appear to be important in this connection, such as similarity of religious and ethnic backgrounds, social class, and age level. These are among the elements constituting homogamy in marriage, and we have dealt with them in this context in chapter 9. Other factors have a positive correlation with marital adjustment. These factors include similar temperamental traits, complementary authority patterns, and conventional attitudes toward marital behavior. Marriage involves two adult personalities, with all their varied characteristics. We cannot examine all the possible factors that are related to marital success.

We shall conclude our discussion with a brief examination of the prediction of marital success. This process raises many theoretical questions of methodology, which we can only touch upon here. The most important consideration, however, is the fact that scientific techniques can be applied to this crucial sector of life, which has traditionally been left to the astrologers and the readers of horoscopes. The problem has by no means been solved, but a significant start has been made. The principal weakness of the prediction studies arises from the goals they are attempting to measure, which by their very nature are intangible. In final analysis, the mathematical techniques of prediction rest upon a subjective evaluation of the degree of "happiness." "adjustment," or "success" of the marriage. It is no reflection upon the calibre of the investigations to suggest that these basic data present unsolved problems of definition.[35]

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[34] Wesley C. Mitchell, "The Backward Art of Spending Money," *American Economic Review*, June 1912, II, 269-81.

The general purpose of marriage prediction tests is to discover what factors, if any, in the personality and background of the participants are associated with marital success. After these factors have been established in general, the next step is to discover the degree to which they are present in any given couple. The presence or absence of these significant traits then serves as the basis for prediction of the possible success or failure of marriage. The pioneer in the sociological approach to marriage prediction is Dr. Ernest W. Burgess. We may follow his outline in indicating the general steps in this process.[36]

1. The first step is the selection of the criteria of success in marriage, that is, the factors that are assumed to mean that the marriage is successful.
2. The second step is to give each of these factors a numerical value, and the total score for any couple represents the degree of success of their marriage.
3. The third step is to discover what items in the personalities of each of the spouses are predictive of marital success.
4. The fourth step is to find the relationship between the items assumed to be predictive of marital success (in step 3) with the success score of the marriage (in step 2).
5. The fifth step is to work out a total prediction score for each couple, based upon the answers they give to the items that (in step 4) were found to be associated with marital success.[37]

Several important reservations or explanations should be made concerning this outline of the technique of marital prediction. Perhaps the most important is that these methods of prediction are stated in terms of *probabilities* of success for a group of cases rather than for any individual case. A certain premarital prediction score can, therefore, indicate the chances of success of a *group* of persons with such a score, but they cannot predict the possible outcome of any individual marriage. Each marriage is a case by itself, with unique personality characteristics of its members and individual interpretations of their roles. A favorable premarital prediction score for a given couple can thus *suggest* that their chances of ultimate success are relatively good. But the prediction is made in terms of probabilities and not of certainties in any one case. These data may be fruitfully used in counseling an individual couple, but they do not *guarantee* marital success.[38]

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[35] Cf. Marvin J. Taves, "A Direct vs. an Indirect Approach in Measuring Marital Adjustment," *American Sociological Review*, October 1948, XIII, 538-41.

[36] Burgess, "Predictive Methods and Family Stability," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, November 1950, CCLXXII, 47-52.

[37] *Ibid.*, pp. 48-49.

The use of prediction tests may have other and more clearly salutary effects upon the degree of adjustment in marriage. These effects may be either direct or indirect. The following benefits have resulted from participation in these tests by engaged couples: (a) The couples stated that the act of filling out a schedule had an educational effect, for it indicated some of the elements comprising a successful marriage; (b) The marriage counselor is given considerable general information about the couple, in addition to that secured from his own interviews; (c) The marriage counselor is also given specific information that may be more valid than his own intuitive insights; (d) The counselor is able to find information from the predictive data on the schedule indicating that the couple should have additional interviews or more counseling work.[39]

There are also deficiencies and limitations in the use of marriage prediction tests, in addition to those we have already mentioned. Among these are the following: (a) Mass statistical data should be applied to individual cases only with great caution. The happiness of the parents, for example, is closely associated statistically with the happiness of the marriage of the children. In an individual case, however, unhappiness of the parents might stimulate the children to make additional efforts for their marriage to succeed. (b) Statistical predictions deal with an aggregate of individual factors in the personalities and backgrounds of the participants. These factors may lack meaning unless they are seen in terms of the person acting as a dynamic entity. Insight of this kind can come only from a personal interview. (c) A third limitation in the use of these tests is the tendency for the individual to ask the counselor for specific guidance, in terms of things to do or not to do. Burgess believes that the individual should be encouraged to work out his own marital salvation, rather than ask for specific guidance.[40]

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[38] *Ibid.*, pp. 49-52.

[39] Ernest W. Burgess, "The Value and Limitations of Marriage Prediction Tests," *Marriage and Family Living*, Spring 1950, XII, 54-55.

In this chapter, we have surveyed the problem of marital success and have examined some of the factors that contribute to this elusive condition. We first considered some of the general criteria of marital success, ranging from absence of divorce to role adjustment. We then discussed happiness as constituting perhaps the most important single subjective criterion of marital success in our society. Out of the many possible patterns of adjustment, we considered those having to do with sexual relations and economic adequacy. Each of these patterns symbolizes many other elements in the total marriage configuration. Sex and economic status are not so important in themselves, but rather stand as symbolic expressions of other and more underlying tensions, of which the individuals may or may not be conscious. We concluded our discussion with a brief examination of the nature, techniques, advantages, and limitations of the prediction of marital success.[41]

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[40] Burgess, "The Value and Limitations of Marriage Prediction Tests," *op. cit.* See also Clifford R. Adams, 'Evaluating Marriage Prediction Tests," *Marriage and Family Living*, Spring 1950, XII, 55-56.

[41] For further discussion of marriage prediction tests, see Albert Ellis, "The Value of Marriage Prediction Tests," *American Sociological Review*, December 1948, XII, 710-18. A rejoinder to this article is given by Lewis M. Terman and Paul Wallin, "The Validity of Marriage Prediction and Marital Adjustment Tests," *American Sociological Review*, August 1949, XIV, 497-504.

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PART IV

THE FAMILY AS A SOCIAL INSTITUTION

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THE FAMILY AS AN INSTITUTION

THE STUDENT of sociology is familiar with the process whereby recurrent human situations bring about formalized group responses. These responses are known as folkways, mores, and laws, in approximate order of increasing formality. Social institutions are the most complex forms which these routinized group responses assume, with elaborate ceremonies, rituals, structures, and responses growing up about certain central and recurrent needs. "Institutions," says Hughes, "are the established forms or conditions of procedure according to which group activity is carried on. But the institutions can arise only by means of continued group behavior. In short," he concludes, "in the study of institutions we focus our attention upon the formally established aspects of collective or group behavior." [1]

The Definition of Social Institutions

Definitions of the social institution have burgeoned with the years and with the increasing interest of students of society in the patterns man has erected to satisfy his perennial necessities. None of the recent definitions has progressed far beyond the classic and epigrammatical one of Sumner, who defined an institution as "a concept . . . and a structure." By the *concept* of an institution, Sumner meant the "idea, notion, doctrine, interest" at the root of the behavior which is thereby channeled to provide the continuing drive of the institution. The *concept* of the family is as simple and as complex as life itself, since the family is the one institution most intimately related to the origin and perpetuation of life. The *concept* of the family thus implies a socially approved relationship for the procreation of children, the perpetuation of the race, and the subsequent care and informal early education of the new members of society.[2]

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[1] Everett C. Hughes, "Institutions," *An Outline of the Principles of Sociology*, ed. Robert E. Park (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1939), p. 285.

The *structure* of the institution is the social apparatus created for the purpose of realizing the concept. In Sumner's words, it is "a framework, or apparatus, or perhaps only a number of functionaries set to cooperate in prescribed ways at a certain conjuncture." [3] Concept and structure are reciprocal parts of a functioning whole, either of which is logically impossible without the other. The institution has a place for the dream and the dreamer as well as for the plan and the planner. The visionary and the administrator may collaborate happily in the founding and continuance of the institution, the visionary in the early and the executive in the later stages. In our subsequent consideration of the family as an institution, we shall be concerned with its concept, structure, and functions. The last elements grow out of the former, for without the concept of the family and its appropriate structure the functions would be nonexistent.

The family is still the central institution in our society. For centuries it was the primary institution around which all the others revolved. For millenia before that, it was the single and all-inclusive institution from which the others developed. Long before human history began, the basic recurrent needs of human beings for reproduction, food, clothing, shelter, protection, education, religion, and affection were met through the social pattern of the family. This chapter is a discussion of the family as a social institution. An understanding of the family in this context should give the student additional insight into the role which this institution plays in society.

The family has certain characteristics in common with all institutions. Certain others are unique to it. This chapter will consider both types of institutional characteristics, but only the most general aspects of those which the family shares with other institutions. The *unique* characteristics of the family, on the other hand, will occupy our attention throughout this entire section. In a sense, indeed, this book constitutes an elaboration of those special characteristics of the family that make it an institution of central importance in the social structure. We may first examine the nature of social institutions as such.

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[2] William Graham Sumner, *Folkways* (Boston: Ginn & Company, 1906), pp. 53-54.

[3] *Ibid.*

The Nature of Social Institutions

The social institution uniquely combines the ideal and the practical aspects of human relationships. Institutions arise through the spiritual, as well as the biological and social, needs of human beings. They provide social patterns for channelizing many forms of behavior, which, if unregulated by some such sanctions, would mean chaos and the disintegration of organized society. Social order would be impossible, for example, without mechanisms to regulate the relations of individual to individual; hence some type of government is characteristic of every society. Completely unregulated competition and conflict in the struggle for self-maintenance would result in hopeless anarchy. In all societies, the expression of sex behavior has been controlled, usually by the mores (and laws) associated with marriage and the family.

Institutions are either voluntary or involuntary in character, depending upon whether the individual is free to participate in them or refrain from so doing. The family is clearly an "involuntary" institution, since the individual must belong to the family as a general institution, as well as to a particular family. In later years he can, it is true, formally sever his ties with the family of his birth, but to do so involves a significant change in life. Furthermore, the teachings of his family are an integral part of his personality for the rest of his life, no matter what he may wish to do about it.[4] On the "voluntary" side, he may join a particular church or no church at all, affiliate himself with a given occupation or not, and may or may not choose to go to school beyond a certain point. To be or not to be born in a family, however, is a matter in which he has no choice whatever. Through the institution of the family, he finds himself an involuntary stranger in a strange world.[5]

Institutions also perform an important function in transmitting the social heritage from one generation to the next. The accumulated folkways, mores, laws, traditions, values, technicways, hopes, aspirations, and practices of a given culture are handed down largely through the various institutions. Institutions are thus in a unique position to preserve and transmit to the ages yet unborn the heritage so laboriously collected by man. In this way, social institutions function toward

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[4] Cf. Robert F. Winch, "The Study of Personality in the Family Setting," *Social Forces*, March 1950, XXVIII, 310-16.

[5] Hughes, "Institutions," *op. cit.*, p. 320.

conservatism in society, since they often cherish the values of the past merely because they are the past, rather than because of their applicability to the present. The family, the church, the school, and the government, each in its own field, hand down distinctive segments of the vast human heritage, without which each generation would be forced to begin anew.

This weight of the past knowledge and authority means that the institution is extremely resistant to many aspects of social change, especially those which threaten its position or vested interests. The power of social institutions is based upon the world as it is. Any major change in this world would threaten many of the privileges and powers which the institution has established through the long process of trial and error. There is a close relationship between the power of an institution and its resistance to social change. Many institutions have much to lose and little to gain by any substantial modification in the social structure. Institutional patterns form an integral part of the personalities of the participants, who thus identify themselves with the institution. Any attack on the institution becomes a personal attack on its members, and any change becomes a threat to their personal integrity.

Another characteristic of social institutions is their role in social control. This concept refers to all the social influences—conscious and unconscious, deliberate and spontaneous—that determine or direct attitudes and conduct. At one end of the scale of social control are the folkways and mores, many of them growing up about the basic institutions and thus determining conduct. At the other end are the formal and categorical imperatives of a dictatorial state, imposed by the absolute power of a totalitarian regime. Between these two extremes the control of the average institution over its members and functionaries operates, imposing definitions of conduct and prescribing specific patterns of behavior. The individual is so subtly molded in his attitudes and behavior by these definitions and patterns that he is not even conscious of the process and believes himself to be a free agent, the complete captain of his soul.

Membership in an institution involves a series of reciprocal roles or parts which the individual performs and which govern his behavior accordingly. Each of these roles carries with it both rights and duties, obligations to every other member and to the organization itself. The member learns these roles as he participates in the institutional process. The roles carry with them restraints and prohibitions, precepts and standards of morality, all of which influence conduct in the direction demanded by the traditional standards. Age and tradition invest these standards, particularly those pertaining to the ancient and powerful institutions. Society prescribes these roles—a good father, mother, or son; a good teacher or pupil; a good church member, minister, or priest; a good governor, president, or citizen. Each of these groups of roles is closely related to one institution or group of institutions. Taken together, they go a long way toward determining the conduct of a society.

Social institutions form the foundation upon which all organized societies are erected. The institutional patterns, the relative importance of one institution, the forms of control, the roles and the resultant personalities—all these differ from one society to another. These differences constitute perhaps the most important single respect in which societies do differ. We have already considered the general place of the family in American culture. The picture of the family in the American ethos, as given in Part I, was largely an institutional portrait. We may turn now to a study of the family in its more clearly institutional aspects: its structure, its changing functions, and the functions that remain to make it a continuing force in our society.

The Family as a Social Institution

Every society that we know anything about is based upon the family. The form this institution takes varies with the basic culture patterns of the several societies. In our own society, we are members of *conjugal* families, in which the central relationship is that of husband and wife not related by "blood." In many other cultures, the family takes the *consanguine* form, in which the basic relationship is that of "blood" relatives and the outside spouse plays a relatively unimportant role.[6] Either type of family works with reasonable efficiency within its appropriate cultural milieu and would be impossible in another setting. Whatever the cultural environment, in one form or another the family is the basic institution.

In our society, virtually every man or woman is a member of at least one family (the family of orientation) in which he or she is born. The number of persons who are born outside of a family is statistically not important, even though individual cases of illegitimacy may be extremely unhappy. In 1949, there were an estimated 133,200 illegitimate births in the United States, as compared to a total of 3,722,000 live births. Approximately 37.4 out of every thousand live births are out of wedlock,[7] but this does not mean that the children are reared without any family relationship whatever. Many are incorporated into a family by the subsequent marriage of the mother, either to the real father or to another who is willing to assume the role. Others are legally adopted by childless families and receive loving care throughout their early years. Still others are permanently boarded in a foster home which, although not ideal, nevertheless approximates a normal family relationship. Only a relatively few of the 133,200 illegitimate children are thus totally deprived of all family contact by early and permanent residence in an institution.

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[6] Ralph Linton, *The Study of Man* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1936), p. 159.

In our society, furthermore, the vast majority of persons also function for a considerable period of their lives as members of another family, which they enter through marriage (the family of procreation). The chances that an average boy or girl will ultimately enter such an additional family relationship are very high: for the young girl of 18, the chances are 87 in 100 that she will eventually marry; for a young man of 21, the chances are 83 in 100. Only 13 per cent of all girls who reach marriageable age do not enter one or more additional families at some time in their lives, and only 17 per cent of the boys attaining marriageable age will remain bachelors.[8] The family is thus perhaps the most universal institutional experience of the human being in our society.

Like every other institution, the family has both its individual and collective aspects. The family of John Smith is an individual relationship involving Mr. Smith, Mrs. Smith, and one or more small Smiths, living under a single roof and daily facing a variety of individual problems. The Smith family also acts in accordance with certain accepted patterns of belief and behavior which they have learned from other persons—from their own parents, their friends, the church, and the neighbors. Each individual family thus participates in a common matrix of folkways and mores that are transmitted in the cultural heritage and make up the distinctive character of the family in America, as contrasted with other cultural groups.

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[7] Federal Security Agency, Public Health Service, National Office of Vital Statistics, *Vital Statistics of the United States, 1949. Part I* (Washington, 1951), p. XXXIII.

[8] Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, "The Chances of Marriage," *Statistical Bulletin*, May 1942.

The "superorganic" nature of culture is evident in this view of the family, which is clearly more than the sum of its individual parts. The cultural heritage centered in and about the family institution goes on irrespective of the fate of any individual unit. But without any of these units, there would be no family institution, for these patterns do not have their being in a vacuum. No conception that fails to take into consideration both its individual and collective aspects would present a rounded picture of the family or any other institution. Every individual family exists in the social climate of custom and tradition which links it to every other family within the society. The common nature of these clusters of customary patterns constitutes the essential institutional quality.

The family is the central agency for transmitting the culture of the group during the formative years of the individual. This function gives the family a predominant position in the matter of social control. The roles assumed by the infant and child are perforce those of dependency and reliance upon the older members to define his conduct under a variety of circumstances. The culture of the larger group is filtered through to the child by his immediate family, as they interpret the meanings and symbols of society to him. For the time being, he has no other source of information or standard of judgment. This is a subtle as well as a most efficient form of social control, for it is exerted without any realization by the individual of what is going on.[9]

Hughes has suggested that "Institutions may . . . profitably be classified according to the nature and limits of the claims of the participating individuals upon each other." [10] The claims which the members of the family place upon one another are numerous and strong. These claims are seldom matters of rational question but are taken as matters of course, so self-evident that they are not worthy of discussion. The expectations implicit in these claims are the elements of social control, whereby the individual acts as a good father, a good son, or a good brother as those roles are defined in his society. The claims upon the members of the immediate family are so deeply inculcated in the individual that he need not be formally admonished to honor his father and mother or to view their demands with especial attention. Similarly, the parents sense a powerful claim upon their affections, labor, and very lives through their children, a claim which is an integral part of the patterns associated with the family.[11]

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[9] Ernest R. Groves, *The Family and Its Social Functions* (Chicago: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1940), chap. VII.

[10] Hughes, "Institutions," *op. cit.*, p. 291.

Other institutions do not have these deep and abiding claims upon their members. Certain business institutions, political organizations, and religious associations attempt by various means to inculcate such attitudes into their members and functionaries. These attempts are successful in varying degrees with individual members and institutions, but in general the claims cannot be compared in intensity and ubiquity to those emanating from the family. The average individual feels a loyalty to his immediate family above all other claims, with the possible exception of that of the national state in time of war. The emotional foundations for these claims are laid in each generation, as the parents lavish affection upon their children, who are ready to do the same for their own children when the time comes. The claims between grown children and their parents are not as strong as they were in the patriarchal family. Nor are those upon the more remote members of the family—cousins, uncles, aunts, grandparents, and others outside the immediate small circle. The intimate family, however, still exerts a stronger claim upon its members than any other institution; its ties bind the individual with "cords of silver."

The family is both the most venerable of all institutions and the most transitory. As a general institution it has existed since long before recorded history and will continue to exist in some form for the foreseeable future. The forms have varied with the social patterns, but the institution itself has continued. The *individual* family, however, is an extremely ephemeral institution and is becoming increasingly so. In a settled environment, the individual family may maintain considerable continuity, particularly when a definite piece of land is identified with it from generation to generation. Families of a royal or aristocratic lineage manage to achieve continuity through wealth, prerogative, or a combination thereof. Even in early America, the individual family managed a considerable degree of continuity.

Contemporary factors, however, are tending to diminish much of this individual continuity. The proportion of childless couples has increased rapidly, perhaps by almost one hundred per cent in the half century between 1870 and 1920. In the earlier year, less than one in twelve married women came to the end of the reproductive period without having borne any children, whereas for the more recent year approximately one in seven was childless.[12] If such figures prevail for the individuals being married at the present time, fifteen per cent of all families will die out in a single generation.

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[11] Cf. James H. S. Bossard, *The Sociology of Child Development* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1948), chaps. 6, 7.

The recent vogue of small families of one and two children is further evidence that individual families are not reproducing themselves. For mere biological continuity, it is necessary that every woman now in the reproductive period should bear one female child who will survive to the reproductive age. Assuming the birth of about even numbers of the sexes, it can be readily seen that more than two children must be born to each married couple to insure continuity. With increased childlessness and the growing tendency to limit the size of families to one or two children, the chances of continuity of many families beyond one or two generations is problematical.

The increasing rate of divorce further indicates that the chances of a young husband and wife to continue in the same family relationship are steadily decreasing. Based on the number of divorces per 1,000 married females fifteen years of age and over, the divorce rate had considerably more than doubled between 1900 and 1940. In the decade 1940 to 1950, the postwar "inflation" in the number of divorces reached its peak in 1946, with 610,000 divorces granted in that year. This rate was more than four times greater than that of 1900. Since 1946 there has been a decline in the number of divorces granted annually, but the rate for 1951 was still considerably above that for 1940.[13]

Divorce rates are considered in more detail below, in connection with the vexing problem of family disorganization. The important consideration here is that the permanence of the individual family is declining. No other institution has so high a mortality among its individual units and at the same time maintains its fundamental structure relatively intact. In its individual manifestations, the family is increasingly impermanent. In its general manifestations, it is as solid as a rock.

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[12] Report of Inter-Agency Committee on Background Materials, National Conference on Family Life, May 1948, *The American Family: a Factual Background* (Washington 1948), p. 24.

[13] Federal Security Agency, Public Health Service, National Office of Vital Statistics, "Provisional Marriage and Divorce Statistics, United States, 1948." *Vital Statistics-Special Reports*, November 4, 1949, Vol. 31, No. 16, p. 222.

Also Federal Security Agency, National Office of Vital Statistics, *Press Release*, July 9, 1952.

The Structure of the Family

The institutional character of the family may be further explored in terms of its structure. In his analysis of cultural change, Chapin has suggested a general frame of reference for social institutions in the following terms: "We may say that the structure of a social institution consists in the combination of certain related type parts into a configuration possessing the properties of relative rigidity and relative persistence of form, and tending to function as a unit on a field of contemporary culture." [14] The four "type parts" that combine to produce the configuration of any institutional structure are as follows: (1) attitudes and behavior patterns, (2) symbolic culture traits, (3) utilitarian culture traits, and (4) oral or written specifications.[15] This general structural analysis may be applied to the principal institutions of our society. We are concerned here with its implications for the family.

1. *Attitudes and Behavior Patterns.* The first structural element in the family is a cluster of "common reciprocating attitudes of individuals and their conventionalized behavior patterns." These involve the expectations implicit in such family sentiments and relationships as "love, affection, devotion, loyalty, and parental respect." [16] In a sense, much of our previous analysis of the cultural matrix of the American family has been concerned with these attitudes and behavior patterns. We shall mention only briefly some of the principal elements implied in them.

An outstanding characteristic of this family is its individualism. We have referred to this factor many times before and will continue to do so. In many respects, individualism offers the key to an understanding of the contemporary family, as compared either with the traditional patriarchal form in our own society or the different forms in other societies. In contrast to many societies, the accepted way with us is to give the individual almost complete freedom of choice of a marital partner. To be sure, opportunities are limited by social and economic position or by such factors as residential or occupational propinquity.[17] Many families also operate in subtle if not overt ways to exercise some measure of control over the marital choices of their children.[18] There are doubtless unconscious forces at work to fix the limits of choice.[19]

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[14] F. Stuart Chapin, *Cultural Change* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1928), p. 48.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 49.

[16] *Ibid.* pp. 48-49.

Nevertheless, under the romantic and democratic traditions each individual is presumably endowed with the mature faculty of making both an independent and a wise choice of a lifelong partner. Because of this emphasis upon individual freedom, those characteristics of a mate that are determinative in other cultures—economic skills and abilities, physical fitness, and similar social status—are of secondary significance in comparison with the criterion of being in love.

Law and public opinion in our society unite in support of the position that the marriage relationship is one of reciprocal rights and duties. The tradition of male superiority dies hard, and many survivals of such superior rights remain in our statutes. Nevertheless, the wife is slowly winning the battle for emancipation. She is now in large measure a legal personality, fully qualified to hold and administer property, make contracts, execute wills, and exercise the franchise. No longer may the husband, either in law or with social sanction, abuse, maltreat, or beat his wife. She is also entitled to economic support, affection and loyalty from her husband.

The husband's rights become the wife's obligations: to be a conscientious homemaker, a faithful companion "in sickness and in health," and a devoted mother to the children born of the union. The attitude that the wife should also be an economic partner, contributing not only homemaking services but at times working for wages outside the home, is an increasingly accepted aspect of the partnership. Mutual devotion of husband and wife is expected, and social approval is generally accorded the partner who is loyal to an unfaithful spouse.

Children as well as wives share in the new freedom. This is in sharp contrast to the social attitudes prevalent in colonial America. At that time, the child occupied a distinctly subordinate position in the family. Although parental affection was not lacking, parental authority was in theory absolute, even though in practice it may not have followed its theoretical rigidity. Parental respect, filial devotion, and obedience may have been artificial when secured from the child under compulsion. Such behavior is genuine only when it arises from mutual understanding and sympathy between the two generations. Hence there may be more genuine parental respect and devotion today than in Colonial times.

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[17] Ray H. Abrams, "Residential Propinquity as a Factor in Marriage Selection: Fifty Year Trends in Philadelphia," *American Sociological Review*, June 1943, VIII, 288-94.

Ruby Jo Reeves Kennedy, "Premarital Residential Propinquity and Ethnic Endogamy," *American Journal of Sociology*, March, 1943, XLVIII, 580-84.

[18] Alan Bates, "Parental Roles in Courtship," *Social Forces*, May 1942, XX, 483-86.

[19] Ernest W. Burgess and Paul Wallin, "Homogamy in Social Characteristics," *American Journal of Sociology*, September 1943, XLIX, 109-24.

Individualism, however, often leads to anarchy when carried to extremes. The revolt against the authoritarian regime of the patriarchal family has led, in many cases, to the interpretation of freedom in terms of license. The rapidity of social change in other aspects intensified the inevitable gap between generations. The modern emphasis upon mutual understanding does not always successfully bridge it. In their initial study of Middletown, the Lynds observed that perhaps never before in history had social change produced such a wide rift between parents and children.[20] Ten years later, their first conclusion received further confirmation: "Adult-imposed restraints of obedience to parents, school, and public opinion have weakened further as the adult world has crumbled under the depression." [21] This world seems to have crumbled even more violently during and after World War II.

2. *Symbolic Culture Traits.* "Objects charged with emotional and sentimental meaning to which human behavior has been conditioned" [22] constitute the second of the type-parts of the institutional structure. These traits consist of such symbolic objects as marriage rings, family crests, coats of arms, family heirlooms, and the like. The rites and ceremonies associated with marriage and the family have served a variety of purposes. The most important purpose served by the betrothal and marriage ritual has been to make public that two people are hereafter to be considered as having contracted, vowed, and sealed an essentially social relationship. Inherent also in the ritual has been the religious purpose of invoking the favorable attitudes of the beneficent spirits and warding off the untoward behavior of the malevolent powers. Whatever the origin of modern practices connected

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[20] Robert S. Lynd and Helen M. Lynd, *Middletown* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1929), pp. 151-52.

[21] Robert S. Lynd and Helen M. Lynd, *Middletown in Transition* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1937), p. 168.

[22] Chapin, *Cultural Change*, p. 49.

with the marriage rituals, they still serve as a symbol of the public union of two people.

These ceremonies have certain symbolic objects employed in conjunction with them. The wedding ring is one symbol still in universal use in our society. The giving of a betrothal ring and its corollary, a wedding ring, has been interpreted as a substitution for the payment of money or goods to the bride's family. It would appear that the Christian Church took over the use of the ring from prevalent Roman practice, although the ring also appears in other cultures. Even more foreign to the modern mind is the curious medieval superstition that the fourth finger of the woman's left hand was a "sinew or string from the heart." Hence the putting-on of the ring signified "that the heart of the wife ought to be united to her husband." [23] The contemporary practice of giving a ring to the bride at the wedding would probably be rationalized, if the couple thought about it at all, only as a symbolic bond between them. Its history and original significance are almost completely forgotten, but the ring remains a symbolic trait associated with marriage.

Contemporary newlyweds would be equally perplexed to explain certain other traits associated with the wedding ritual. What good purpose, for example, is served by the throwing of rice after the ceremony? This practice stemmed from the ancient belief that grain symbolized fertility, and hence well-wishers are attempting, in this symbolic manner, to insure the marriage against childlessness. A cavalcade of automobiles, following another automobile decorated with streamers, rude signs, cowbells, and tin cans today serves notice that society has placed its (decidedly public) stamp of approval on a new marital union. The serenaders and the serenadees are probably alike unaware that they are participating in a rite that may have originated in the desire to drive out malevolent spirits.

Other symbolic survivals may be mentioned. The bridal veil and wreath are preserved by the wife and frequently refashioned to provide similar equipment for daughters and granddaughters. Gone are the ancient notions of Roman times about veiling the betrothed maiden; forgotten are the almost equally ancient Christian ceremonies of covering "with the heavenly veil" the bride-to-be. Long since lost is the ceremony of crowning the bride with flowers, olive branches, silver, gold, or myrtle, which was the procedure in the Eastern branch of the early Church.[24] Briffault suggests that veiling originated in the desire to "ward off the evil eye" and insure the property rights of the husband.[25] Whatever the original significance, the modern practice represents another survival of a symbolic culture trait.

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[23] George E. Howard, A *History of Matrimonial Institutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1904), I, 411.

Many modern marriages are accompanied by a wedding feast. The practice of eating in connection with the celebration of significant events is very ancient. Where eating occurs in connection with the modern wedding, there occurs the inevitable wedding cake. Among some primitives, the sharing of a cake is the only public act connected with marriage.[26] The eating of a sacred cake constituted an essential part of the marriage ceremony of the Roman patriarchal family. Presents to and from the attendants and the exchange of gifts between bride and groom may at some time have possessed great social import; today they carry some practical utility, but are primarily emotional and sentimental in content.

After the wedding comes the honeymoon. Objects, places, and souvenirs connected with this "flight" come to have symbolic meaning for the individuals concerned. Similarly, objects, persons, and places associated with crises in the life of the family come to have symbolic content. The room where the first child was born, the doctor who attended the mother, and the clergyman who christened the child are more than prosaic persons and places. Many families also possess heirlooms that are handed down from generation to generation and come to symbolize family continuity. A piece of furniture, a grandfather clock, or a breech-loader are among the variegated forms such objects take as emblems of the family connection with the past. For the generation now passing, the family Bible served as perhaps the most symbolic culture trait of all in connection with its utilitarian purpose of keeping records of births, deaths, and marriages.

3. *Utilitarian Culture Traits.* These are defined by Chapin as "cultural objects possessing utilitarian value: that is, material objects that satisfy creature wants." [27] The home and the rest of the functional objects associated with it form the most obvious components of this

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[24] Howard, *A History of Matrimonial Institutions*, I, 295, notes 5, 6.

[25] Robert Briffault, *The Mothers* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1927), I, 558.

[26] Willystine Goodsell, *A History of Marriage and the Family* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1934), p. 123.

[27] Chapin, *Cultural Change*, p. 49.

institutional type part. Every institution needs some concrete embodiment in external material structure. The home fulfills this function for the family. A universal characteristic for our culture is that when two people from divergent parental families marry, they set up housekeeping apart from either family, if this is at all possible. This action in turn implies some physical structure wherein a reasonable amount of privacy and independence is assured.

In the traditional pattern of American life, this function has been fulfilled by a single home, owned and occupied by a single family. In 1950 there were approximately 42,500,000 dwelling units in the United States. Of this number, 55 per cent were owner-occupied, in contrast to 43.6 per cent 10 years previously.[28] This situation varies between urban and rural areas,[29] but even in urban areas the percentage of homes occupied by owners increased from 38 per cent in 1940 to 48 per cent in 1947. The corresponding increases in rural-nonfarm and rural-farm homes were from 52 per cent to 66 per cent, and from 53 per cent to 66 per cent, respectively.[30] The relative prosperity of the war and postwar years brought about a reversal in the longtime trend toward renting in place of home ownership. When two-thirds of rural-nonfarm and almost one-half of urban households are occupied by home owners, it can be said that America is still predominantly a nation of single homes.

Ownership and occupancy of the family home tend to add a certain physical stability to the relationship which is lacking when the family lives in rented quarters, particularly those of the multiple-dwelling type. The family is more mobile when it rents. It has a smaller stake in the community. As Burgess and Locke point out: "Stabilized relationships between husbands and wives are more prevalent among those who own and live in their own homes. The objective of buying a home is a unifying factor, especially where husband and wife and children make sacrifices for its purchase. A home, even more than the common ownership of other property, is a symbolic expression of family solidarity." [31]

The house, apartment, or other dwelling unit forms the basic material structure through which the family operates; house equipment, furnishings, and personal property of all kinds constitute a supplementary group of utilitarian culture traits. Housekeeping implies not merely owning or renting a house or apartment; it implies also that the tools must be supplied with which to carry out the services associated with separate and individualistic family units. An invitation to a wedding therefore embodies the suggestion that a contribution to the new household will be welcome. Although the dowry of the bride is no longer in our mores, her father is often expected to make a present earmarked for a payment on a house or for the purchase of living room or bedroom furniture. Among certain classes, kitchen "showers" are customary, for what could be a more effective reminder of the role change of the bride than to be "showered" with paring knives, ladles, dishes, and pots and pans? The baby "shower" for the expectant mother serves a like purpose of providing some of the operational devices necessary for the completion of the family unit.

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[28] *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1951, 723.

[29] Cf. Ernest W. Burgess and Harvey J. Locke, *The Family* (New York: American Book Company, 1945), p. 490.

[30] United States Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports, Housing*, October 29, 1947, Series P-70, No. 1, Washington.

[31] Burgess and Locke, *The Family*, p. 529.

4. *Oral or Written Specifications.* The final type part of the institutional structure is the cluster of "oral or written language symbols which preserve the descriptions and specifications of the patterns and interrelationship among attitudes, symbolic cultural traits, and utilitarian culture traits." [32] These specifications include such things as the marriage license, the wedding certificate, and announcements in the press; laws governing the entrance to marriage and those concerned with marital relationships; public records that bear witness to the marriage and the birth of children; deeds and other documents as evidence of the ownership of property; and testaments and wills.

"It is vital to society," remark Sumner and Keller, "that the entrance of its members into the status of wedlock shall be generally known, so that they and their offspring can thereafter be 'placed' in their setting as husbands, wives, children, families, with the result that their rights and duties toward each other within the relation and toward others outside of it can fall under the local system of composition and regulation." [33] Society has always regarded marriage as one of the "seven ages of man" and as representing a marked change in the status of the individuals involved. It has, therefore, been surrounded with ceremonial and other practices deemed essential to give adequate publicity to

[32] Chapin, *Cultural Change*, p. 49.

[33] William G. Sumner and A. G. Keller, *The Science of Society* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1927), III, 1696.

the event. The individuals desiring to marry in our society generally secure a marriage license from the agency or agencies designated by the state. This permits the passing of a final judgment as to whether the larger social interests are served by allowing the two to marry.

The legal code of any contemporary society as it relates to marriage and the family would, by its impressive bulk, testify to the importance of written specifications concerning this institution. In the United States, such laws are particularly voluminous because these matters have always been a state rather than a federal prerogative. In the midst of great diversity, however, certain uniformities may be briefly mentioned. Most states provide that males of twenty-one years of age and females of eighteen may marry of their own volition. At common law, males of fourteen and females of twelve could make a valid contract of marriage. Between this minimum age of consent and the later ages, individuals are required to secure the permission of their parents or guardians. There is reasonable uniformity in the laws prohibiting the marriage of blood-kin, of those whose prior marriage has not been legally dissolved (bigamy), and of those of unsound mind.[34]

Thirty states have legislation to prevent the marriage of whites with Negroes, orientals, or Indians. A majority of the states provide for a waiting period of from one to five days from the date of application for the marriage license until the ceremony may be legally solemnized. Most of the jurisdictions have some form of medical certification as a prerequisite to marriage. This is concerned chiefly with the so-called blood-test laws, requiring all applicants for a marriage license to submit to a blood test showing freedom from venereal disease (chiefly syphilis) in a communicable form.

These and other legal restrictions serve to safeguard entrance to marriage in the interest of the group. They also inform the public that two individuals are about to assume a new relationship that is significant for themselves and for society. The medieval and early modern correlative of this notification was the publication of the banns, "usually on three successive Sundays preceding the nuptials, that any objection on the ground of relationship or other disability might be brought forward." [35] The "banns" persist today in some areas as a survival from a former era. The contemporary device is a waiting period, whereby society publicizes the fact that a new primary group is about to be initiated.

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[34] Chester G. Vernier, *American Family Laws* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1931–1938), 5 vols. and supplement.

See also Richard V. Mackay, *Law of Marriage and Divorce Simplified* (New York: Oceana Publications, 1948).

[35] Howard, *A History of Matrimonial Institutions*, I, 361.

Society further insists that a public record of the wedding be made. All jurisdictions have legal provisions calling for the officiant to file with the appropriate civil agency a statement that a wedding has taken place. No matter how secretive the parties may be concerning their marriage, witnesses must attest that two individuals have changed their system of relationships. Curiously enough, the presentation of a wedding certificate, booklet, or other tangible record to the participants themselves is often optional with the one who performs the ceremony. Apparently it is not considered so important to the individuals that they shall have a record of the marriage as it is for society to be notified.

The one exception to the above is the continued practice of common-law marriage. This is "a marriage which does not depend for its validity upon any religious or civil ceremony but is created by the consent of the parties as any other contract." [36] Marriages in which two people simply agree to live together without benefit of license or ceremony are still recognized, either by court decisions or by statutory law, in approximately half of American jurisdictions. Such marriages are, relatively speaking, very few, and legal authorities as well as public opinion frown upon them. These facts indicate that common-law marriage is an anachronism in contemporary society. This kind of marriage will doubtless be outlawed in time by specific state legislative enactment. When this change occurs, it will be further evidence that society expects the individual to conform to the social dictates concerning this change in status.

It is equally necessary that announcements and records be made of the birth of children. No longer is it sufficient to record the coming of the child in the family Bible. Laws require that a certificate of birth be filed by the attendant doctor, midwife, or other person with the proper authority. The relation of the child to the family and to the larger group is a matter that cannot be left to chance. Vital statistics of this sort are extremely significant. The obligations of parents to children and the rights of children in inheritance require a permanent record of the group position of the child. Official birth certificates are of further importance in such cases as: (a) determining the exact age of the boy who wants to leave school and go to work; (b) settling disputed questions relative to the age of an individual applying for life insurance; and (c) fixing the age of citizens liable for military service.

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[36] Otto E. Koegel, *Common Law Marriage and Its Development in the United States* (Washington: John Byrne & Company, 1922), p. 7.

When parents decide to adopt a child, it is equally important that the proper procedures be followed and adequate records be kept of the new relationship into which the child is entering. All the states have statutes making provision for adoption, for which court proceedings are usually necessary. A number of states now require extensive investigations concerning both the desirability of the child for adoption and the suitability of the parents for their new social responsibility. Such laws indicate a growing concern for the well-being of the child and also point to the necessity for publicly fixing the new status of the individuals concerned.

This analysis of the family has presented the institution as a going concern in terms of its concept and structure. The concept has been briefly considered in terms of the inner realities of the family that comprise its reason for being. This discussion of the concept will be supplemented in subsequent chapters when we consider the functions of the family. We have followed Chapin in his delineation of the four structural type parts of social institutions in general, with particular reference to the family. Taken all together, these elements of concept and structure comprise the cultural configuration we call the family.

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15

THE COMPOSITION OF THE FAMILY

THE AMERICAN FAMILY as a social institution is an abstraction, an ideal construct having no independent existence apart from the millions of little groups in the United States. These groups comprise the "real" family, and it is only through these units that the culture patterns determining the conduct of the family have any viable reality. These individual groups are the human agencies by which the concept and structure of the family are transmitted from one generation to the next. It is important, therefore, to establish our further investigation into the institutional nature of the family upon firm quantitative bases. Only then can the subsequent analyses have any solid grounding in fact. The composition of the family will be here treated in terms of such prosaic but fundamental facts as the number of families in the United States; the number of persons living in family relationships; the extent to which new families are formed; the rate at which they are augmented by the birth of children; the rural-urban composition; the age composition; the educational composition; and the socio-economic composition of the family.

The Quantitative View of the Family

The primary emphasis in this treatment of marriage and the family in American culture is on the middle-class, urban, white, native-born family. In many parts of the world, the concept of the family conjures up a comparatively uniform picture, with many of the features essentially similar from family to family. In the cosmopolitan and heterogeneous United States, however, there is a wide variety of subcultures that are reflected in the differential training given by the family to its members. All the children in the country at any one period are thus subjected to the same *general* cultural forces, but the *specific* nature of these influences differs among regions, ethnic groups, and socio-economic levels.[1] The broader quantitative picture of the family as an institution will place in sharper focus the particular segment of the American family with which this book is chiefly concerned.

The Bureau of the Census defines the family as including "a group of two or more persons related by blood, marriage, or adoption, and residing together; all such persons are considered as members of the same family." [2] This definition would thus consider as families two brothers or cousins living together, a mother or a father and a child, an aunt and niece, a husband and wife, and other combinations quite different from the analytical definition of the family mentioned above. In 1951 there were approximately 40 million such statistical families in the United States. Of this number, 34,556,000 (or about 86 per cent) were husband-wife families; that is, the husband and wife were both present in the home.

Of the total of 40 million families, only 1 in 10 consisted of 6 or more persons and about 1 in 5 comprised 5 or more persons.[3] This is a striking indication of the fact that the American family is a small-family unit. The distribution of families by size is as follows:

Table 1

CHARACTERISTICS OF FAMILIES BY SIZE: 1951 [4]

Size of Family (*persons*)	*All Families* 39,822,000 Per Cent Distribution	*Husband-Wife Families* 34,556,000 Per Cent Distribution
2	32.9	31.0
3	25.1	24.8
4	20.7	21.8
5	11.1	11.7
6	5.4	5.6
7 or more	4.9	5.2

[1] James H. S. Bossard, *The Sociology of Child Development* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1948), chap. 13, "The Child and the Class Structure."

[2] Bureau of the Census, "Changes in Number of Households and in Marital Status: 1940 to 1949," *Current Population Reports, Population Characteristics*, August 19, 1949, Series P-20, No. 25.

[3] Bureau of the Census, "Marital Status and Household Characteristics: April 1951," *Current Population Reports, Population Characteristics*, April 29, 1952, Series P-20, No. 38.

[4] Bureau of the Census "Marital Status and Household Characteristics: April, 1951," *op. cit.*, Table 13.

The total quantitative aspects of family relationships may also be examined in terms of the marital status of the entire population 14 years of age and over. In 1951, about 111 million Americans were 14 years of age and over. Of this number, 65 per cent were married and living together; 22 per cent were single; 8 per cent were widowed; 3 per cent were married, but living apart from their husbands or wives; and 2 per cent were divorced.[5]

Table 2

MARITAL STATUS OF CIVILIAN POPULATION 14 YEARS OLD AND OVER: 1951

Marital Status	*Total*	*Per Cent*
Total over 14	110,800,000	100
Single	23,900,000	22
Married, living together	72,100,000	65
Married, living apart	3,500,000	3
Widowed	9,300,000	8
Divorced	2,100,000	2

The number of families in the country increased by 25 per cent between 1940 and 1950. The ties of the family seem to have been drawn closer in this decade, despite the increase in divorce. The proportion of widowed, divorced, or separated in comparison to the number ever married declined among both men and women. The number of widowed men among the total of ever-married men decreased from 6.3 per cent in 1940 to 5.1 per cent in 1950. The corresponding reduction among widowed women was from 16.2 per cent to 15.0 per cent.[6] Furthermore, despite the increased rate and number of divorces during the decade 1940–1950, the increase in the percentage of divorced persons among the general population was very small. For men 14 years of age and over, the increase in the percentage of the divorced was from 1.9 to 2.2 during the decade, whereas among women it was from 2.3 to 2.7 per cent.

We shall consider below some of the factors contributing to the over-all decrease in family disruption. Among the most important considerations are: (a) the decline in the mortality rate; and (b) the tendency for divorced persons to remarry. The most important factor disrupting the physical stability of the family is not divorce but death. In the year 1948, some 667,000 marriages were broken in this manner, as compared to 408,000 by divorce. Under the mortality conditions prevailing in 1900, the number of families broken by death would have been approximately one million. The decade 1940–1950 also saw more than 4,000,000 marriages broken by divorce, but the percentage of those divorced and still unmarried increased only slightly.[7] The great majority of the 8,000,000 divorced persons were remarried. We may assume, therefore, that Americans as a whole believe strongly in marriage and the family, even though their initial ventures may not be successful.

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[5] *Ibid.* Adapted from Table 5.

[6] Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, "American Family Ties Strengthened," *Statistical Bulletin,* March, 1951.

Marriage and Family Composition

The United States is the most completely married nation of the Western world. The favorable economic conditions, the high standard of living, and the pervading optimism make for both greater frequency of marriage and marriage at an earlier age. These conditions have been accentuated during the past decade. In 1940 the proportion of married persons in the population 14 years of age and older was 60 per cent; by 1951 this proportion had increased to 68 per cent.[8]

This increase was greatest among young persons, as is shown by decline in the age of first marriage. In 1940 the median age of men at first marriage was 24.3 years; by 1951 this had dropped to 22.6 years. For women, the median age in 1940 was 21.5 years; in 1951 it was 20.4 years.[9] This general trend is indicated in Figure 2. If this trend continues, it might well represent a significant change in marriage and family life. Early marriages are particularly vulnerable to future disruption. If the age at first marriage continues its downward course, it may have tremendous consequences in terms of family disorganization.

The years since 1930 have seen extensive changes in the establishment of new families in the United States. Depression, partial recovery, war boom, total war, and postwar prosperity have provided a wide variety of social settings for the family. At the depth of the depression in 1932, both the absolute number and the rate of marriage per 1,000 population declined appreciably. The number of marriages contracted in that year was less than one million. The rate was 7.9

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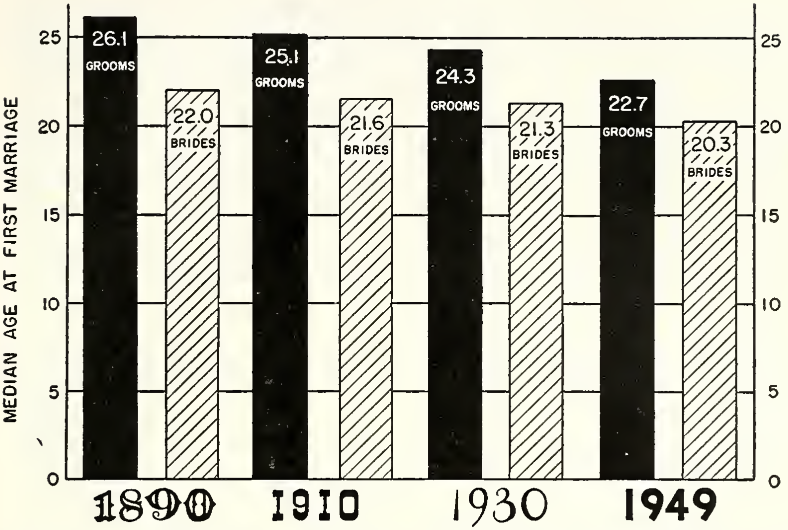
[7] Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, "Lower Mortality Promotes Family Stability," *Statistical Bulletin*, May, 1951.

[8] Bureau of the Census, "Marital Status and Household Characteristics: April 1951," Series P-20, No. 38, p. 1.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 2.

Brides and grooms are younger



Source: Midcentury White House Conference on Children and Youth, CHILDREN AND YOUTH AT THE MIDCENTURY, *Chart 8, Raleigh, North Carolina: Health Publications Institute, Inc., 1951.*

Fig. 2.

per 1,000 population, which was the lowest in 65 years. In 1942, at the height of the war boom and with the impetus of war marriages, the situation was reversed. In that year marriages numbered 1,772,132 and a rate of 13.2 per 1,000 population was reached, the highest rate hitherto on record. The real peak was reached in 1946, when there were 2,291,045 marriages, a rate of 16.4 per 1,000. Marriages for this year were more than double the comparable figures for 1932, both in absolute numbers and in ratios. Nothing even approaching such a ratio had been seen in the United States since the beginning of the collection of marriage data in 1867.

The marriage rate also varies with the business cycle.[10] A glance at the accompanying table will confirm this relationship. Following the low rate of the depression year 1932, there was a slow but comparatively steady increase during the late 1930's, culminating in a rapid acceleration as the nation simultaneously entered the 1940's and the crisis of World War II. The early years of World War II saw a further increase, as a consequence of the war boom and the rush of war marriages. A slight decline occurred during the later years of the war, from 1943–1945 inclusive. Finally, the correlation between prosperous economic conditions and the marriage rate is clearly illustrated by the continued high level of marriage during the years 1946–1951.

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[10] Dorothy S. Thomas, *Social Aspects of the Business Cycle* (London: George Routledge & Sons, Ltd., 1925).

Since the peak year of 1946, there has been a gradual and consistent decline in marriages, both in terms of absolute numbers and in rates. The one exception was the year 1950, when the number of marriages exceeded the figure of 1949. The first six months of 1950 revealed a small percentage decline as compared with the similar period in 1949.

Table 3

NUMBER OF MARRIAGES AND MARRIAGE RATES FOR THE UNITED STATES: 1930–1951 [11]

Year	*Number of Marriages*	*Rate per 1,000 of the Population*
1930	1,126,856	9.2
1931	1,060,914	8.6
1932	981,903	7.9
1933	1,098,000	8.7
1934	1,302,000	10.3
1935	1,327,000	10.4
1936	1,369,000	10.7
1937	1,451,296	11.3
1938	1,330,780	10.3
1939	1,403,633	10.7
1940	1,595,879	12.1
1941	1,695,999	12.7
1942	1,772,132	13.2
1943	1,577,050	11.8
1944	1,452,394	11.0
1945	1,612,992	12.2
1946	2,291,045	16.4
1947	1,991,878	13.9
1948	1,811,155	12.4
1949	1,579,798	10.6
1950	1,667,231	11.1
1951	1,594,900	10.4

Following the outbreak of war in Korea, however, marriages increased and for the latter six months of 1950 they were slightly in excess of the preceding year. The annual number of marriages may continue to decline throughout the decade of the 1950's, because there will be fewer young candidates for marriage. The population profile for 1952 and succeeding years will reflect a smaller number of individuals in the age groups 20 to 29 years of age, owing to the abnormally low birth rate of the 1930's. Predictions in this field are extremely hazardous, however, in view of such variable factors as economic conditions, the possible increase in the percentage of persons who marry, and the continued decline in the age of first marriage.

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[11] Federal Security Agency, Public Health Service, National Office of Vital Statistics, *Summary of Marriage and Divorce Statistics: United States, 1950*, Vital Statistics-Special Reports, October 29, 1952, Vol. 37, No. 3, p. 57. The 1951 figures are from: National Office of Vital Statistics, FSA-E33, Release, July 9, 1952.

The Birth Rate and Family Structure

The population increase in the decade 1940–1950 was not only phenomenal but totally unexpected. Most of the experts in demographic theory had predicted a continued low rate of fertility following the decade of the 1930's and into the then proximate future. The events of the period 1940–1950, however, proved the population theorists wrong. The increase in absolute numbers during this decade was about 19,000,000 persons, the largest for any similar period in the history of the country. The rate of increase was almost double that of the previous (depression) decade.[12] For five successive years from 1947–1951 inclusive, the annual number of births exceeded 3,500,000, in spite of the appreciable decline in the marriage rate from its 1946 peak.

In the years from 1947–1951, more than 18,000,000 babies were born in the United States. The implications of this fact upon the future of marriage and the family in this country are difficult to assess. In 1950, some 10.8 per cent of the total population was in the age group under 5 years, as compared to only 8.0 per cent in 1940 and 9.3 per cent in 1930. It is necessary to go back as far as 1920 to find as large a percentage of the population in this age group. The fluctuations in the number and rate of births are depicted in graphic form in Figure 3.

The trend of the birth rate had been downward for fifty years prior to 1940. The reversal of the past decade may represent a permanent change or it may be a temporary phenomenon associated with a post-

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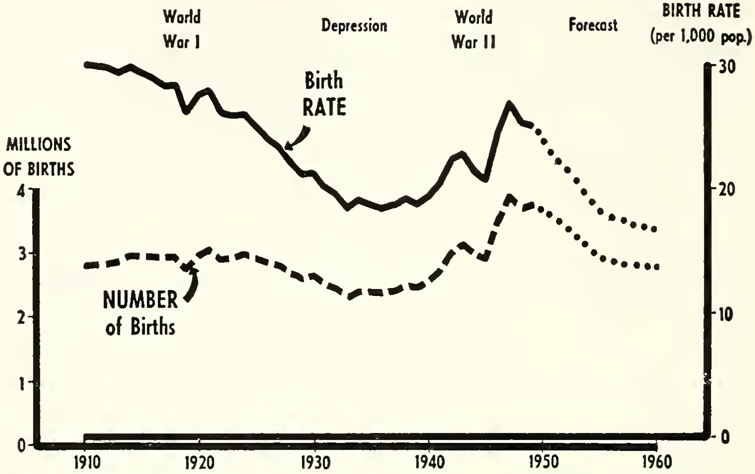
[12] Joseph S. Davis, "Our Amazing Population Upsurge," from an address delivered before the American and Western Farm Economics Association, Laramie, Wyo., August 20, 1949. (Mimeographed.)

Cf. also Davis, "Our Changed Population Outlook and Its Significance," *American Economic Review*, June 1952, XLII, 304-25.

The decade 1940-50 saw great increases in the birth rate and in the number of births

These increases were counter to the long-run trend



Source: Midcentury White House Conference on Children and Youth, op. cit., Chart 1.

Fig. 3.

Table 4 [13]

NUMBER OF BIRTHS AND BIRTH RATE—UNITED STATES
(per 1,000 population)
1930–1951

Year	*Number of Births*	*Birth Rate*
1930	....	18.9
1931	....	18.0
1932	....	17.4
1933	2,081,232	16.6
1934	2,167,636	17.2
1935	2,155,105	16.9
1936	2,144,790	16.7
1937	2,203,337	17.1
1938	2,286,962	17.6

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[13] Bureau of the Census, *United States: Summary of Vital Statistics* 1943, Vital Statistics—Special Reports, February 28, 1945, Vol. 22, No. 1. Figures for 1943–49 taken from Federal Security Agency, National Office of Vital Statistics, *Vital Statistics of the United States*, 1949, Part I, p. XXIV. Figures for 1950 and 1951, from *Monthly Vital Statistics Bulletin*, February 27, 1952, Vol. 14, No. 12. See also, Metropolitan Life Insurance Co., "Changing Pattern of the American Population," *Statistical Bulletin*, May 1952.

NUMBER OF BIRTHS AND BIRTH RATE—UNITED STATES
—*Continued*

1939	2,265,588	17.3
1940	2,360,399	17.9
1941	2,513,427	18.9
1942	2,808,996	20.9
1943	3,127,000	21.5
1944	2,969,000	20.2
1945	2,894,000	19.5
1946	3,458,000	23.3
1947	3,876,000	25.8
1948	3,702,000	24.2
1949	3,722,000	24.0
1950	3,548,000	23.5 (est.)
1951	3,758,000	24.5 (est.)

war and defense prosperity. Continued high birth rates may signify a basic change in the American pattern of thought from the small-family norm to a larger family concept. These are some of the possible implications relative to the bearing of the birth rate on the family which only the future can answer.

The increase in the birth rate in the 1940's was not spread evenly throughout the nation. States having the smallest per capita incomes have traditionally been those where fertility has been the highest. Families having the largest share of the burden of child dependency are thus in the economically poorer states. During the 1940's, however, the greatest relative increase in the birth rate occurred in those sections which usually record the lowest birth rates. For example, "the 'low fertility' states show an increase of 40 per cent between 1940 and 1949; those in the 'medium fertility' group experienced a rise of 33 per cent; and the 'high' states, 26 per cent. Thus the excess in the rate of the 'high fertility' states over the 'low' was reduced from 42 per cent in 1940 to 28 per cent in 1949."[14] Prior to 1940 the urban birth rate had declined to such an extent that this segment of the population was not even reproducing itself. In the past decade the birth rate of the urban population increased by 42 per cent, as compared with a rural increase of only 26 per cent. This situation represents a considerable change from the situation previously existing.[15]

The increase in the birth rate and the number of young children in

[14] Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, "Geographic Differences in Birth Rate Diminish," *Statistical Bulletin,* November 1951.

[15] *Ibid.*

families are shown by the number of children under 5 years old per 1,000 married women 15 to 49 years old. In 1940, there were 452 children under 5 for every 1,000 such women. In 1947 this figure had increased to 526 per 1,000 and by 1949 to 555, an increase of approximately 23 per cent in the decade. The percentage increase for urban women was 36 per cent; that for rural-nonfarm women was 22 per cent; and for rural-farm women it was only 2 per cent.[16] The traditionally greater fertility of farm as compared with urban women was not substantiated in the decade of the 1940's. To be sure, in 1949 the rural-farm women still had a greater number of children under 5 (631) than did their urban sisters (503).

Rural-Urban Composition of the Family

One of the traditional dichotomies in American society has been between the city and the open country, the "corrupt" metropolis and the "virtuous" countryside, the industrial agglomeration of Alexander Hamilton and the agricultural utopia of Thomas Jefferson, and finally the small, equalitarian metropolitan family and the large, patriarchal, and traditional rural family. The family to which many persons still look with nostalgia is the family of Colonial and Pioneer days, virtually self-sufficient economically, and functioning as a largely self-contained entity in such diverse fields as religion, education, protection, and recreation.

We shall see the extent to which this traditional family pattern has been modified by other institutions—both corporate and governmental—in the past half century. These modifications have taken place more rapidly and completely in the metropolitan area, which has long been the center of cultural change. The old-fashioned family living in the cultural backwater has maintained its pristine integrity to a much greater extent than its counterpart in the metropolitan area. The country has been the stronghold of faith and the enemy of heresy against the pagan and changing world of the city. The rural family has similarly resisted change in its traditional form and functions.

The division between city and country has never been complete. It is still less complete today, as transportation and communication combine to break down the cultural isolation of the countryside. The nation is becoming more metropolitan in its attitudes, as the city places its stamp upon even the most isolated community through the movies, newspapers, national magazines, and other means of cultural diffusion. The family is not immune to these changes, and husbands, wives, and children in rural and small town families are gradually assuming the roles characteristic of the metropolitan family. Increasing physical urbanization, exemplified by the growing proportion of persons living in the great metropolitan areas, has intensified the social change begun by intellectual urbanization. These related processes will continue until the pattern of family life becomes more urbanized and emancipated than ever before.

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[16] Adapted from Bureau of the Census, "Marital Fertility: April, 1949," *Current Population Reports: Population Characteristics*, February 3, 1950, Series P-20, No. 27, Tables 1 and 2.

The definitions employed by the Bureau of the Census in enumerating the rural-urban composition of the population are important. "Urban population," says the Bureau, "is that residing in incorporated and unincorporated places of 2,500 or more inhabitants and in the densely settled territory in the suburbs of cities of 50,000 or more, which is called the 'urban fringe.' (This urban fringe territory may include both incorporated and unincorporated territory.)" [17] Changes in the definition of the urban population between the 1940 and 1950 censuses added to the urban total some 5,000,000 persons, who would otherwise have been counted as either rural-farm or rural-nonfarm. "The rural population," continues the Bureau, "is subdivided into the rural-farm population, which comprises all rural residents living on farms, and the rural-nonfarm population, which comprises the remaining rural population." [18]

For the population as a whole in 1950, approximately 63 per cent were living in urban areas (as defined above), 21 per cent in rural-nonfarm areas, and 16 per cent in rural-farm areas.[19] This distribution represents a striking change over the past 150 years; in 1800, it has been estimated that 95 per cent of the population was rural and only 5 per cent urban. Making due allowance for the change in definition of urban areas in the 1950 enumeration, a substantial majority of the present population of the nation is urban. The social trends that have brought about this modification in rural-urban composition of the family have profoundly altered its structure and functions. The rural family is no longer the norm representative of American society, either in numbers or in dominant pattern.

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[17] Bureau of the Census, "Marital Status and Household Characteristics: March 1950," *Current Population Reports, Population Characteristics*, February 12, 1951, Series P-20, No. 33, p. 5.

[18] *Ibid.*

[19] *Ibid.* Adapted from Table 3, p. 12.

The decade of the 1940's, as noted, showed a greater percentage increase in the birth rate for the urban than for the rural family. Despite this differential change, the urban family in 1950 was still somewhat smaller than either the rural-nonfarm or the rural-farm family. The average (mean) size of the family in the nation as a whole was 3.5 persons. Urban families had an average of 3.4 persons, as compared with 3.6 persons in rural-nonfarm and 4.0 persons in rural-farm families.[20] Considerable difference still exists between families in rural and urban areas, despite the diverse factors bringing them closer together.

Age Composition of the Family

A further set of quantitative characteristics of the American family involves its age composition—the average age of marriage, the age levels of children in the family, the age groups of persons of marriageable age in terms of percentages married, and the differences in age between husband and wife. As suggested above, Americans on the whole are marrying younger and founding families earlier than their ancestors. A larger proportion of the population than ever before is married at an early age. The war and postwar conditions accelerated this trend toward early marriages and the establishment of families at a comparatively precocious age.

With regard to the distribution of families in terms of young children, the Bureau of the Census indicated that, in a recent year, almost one-half (48 per cent) of all married couples in the country had no children under 18 living with them in the home. Slightly more than one-fifth of all families (22 per cent) had but one child, and only 30 per cent had 2 or more children living with them. Families in which both husband and wife were in the home represented 87 per cent of the total families listed in 1949, but these husband-wife families constituted 95 per cent of all those with children under 12.[21] The burden of child dependency is thus concentrated in a relatively small proportion of the total number of families. This is shown pictorially in Figure 4. In a society dedicated to the proposition that all persons should have substantial equality of opportunity, these discrepancies are important.

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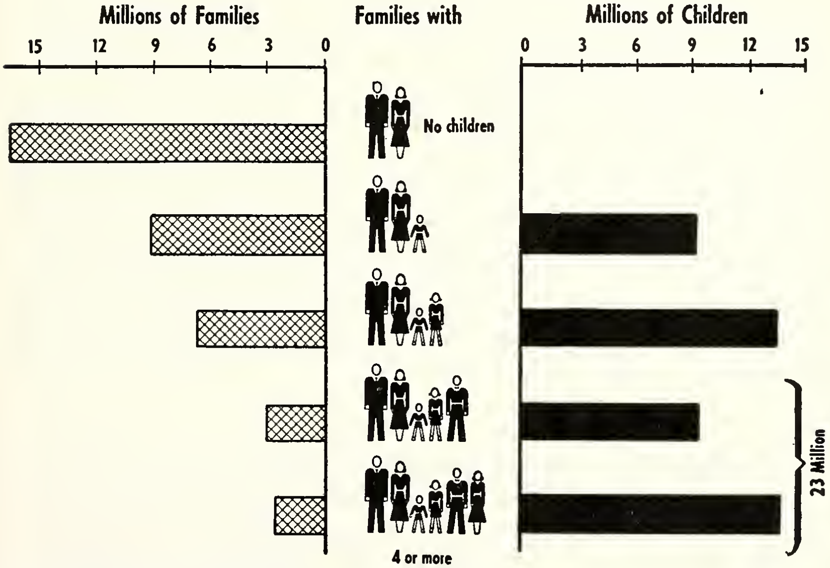
[20] Bureau of the Census, "Marital Status and Household Characteristics: April 1951," *op. cit.*, Table 12, p. 15.

[21] Bureau of the Census, "Marital Status and Household Characteristics: April 1949," *Current Population Reports, Population Characteristics*, January 27, 1950, Series P-20, No. 26. p. 4.

The percentage of males and females married in different age groups constitutes another facet of the age composition of the family. These differentials are shown in Table 7.[22]

Half the children are in families of three or more children

These families with 3 or more children care for 23 million children under 18



Source: Midcentury White House Conference on Children and Youth, op. cit., Chart 11.

Fig. 4.

In the 14 to 19 age group, 1 in 8 girls is married with spouse present, whereas only 1 in 70 boys is married so early. This disparity between males and females continues up to age 35. For the next 20 years, the percentage of males married with spouse present is greater than that for females. From 35 years onward, the figures constitute a striking commentary on the lower life expectancy of the male. After

[22] *Ibid.*, Table 2.

Table 7

PER CENT MARRIED, BY AGE GROUPS: 1949

Age Group (years)	Spouse Present Per Cent Males Married	Spouse Present Per Cent Females Married
14 to 19	1.4	13.2
20 to 24	41.4	63.2
25 to 34	76.5	80.6
35 to 44	85.3	80.7
45 to 54	84.1	74.5
55 to 64	78.5	61.7
65 and over	63.7	34.8
Total—14 years and over	66.1	63.1

65, the males who are married with wife present constitute almost 2 out of 3 of the age group. For the females, however, only about 1 in 3 still enjoys the companionship of her spouse.

The groom tends, on the average, to be about 3 years older than the bride at first marriage. If either is marrying for the second time, the average (median) difference is 4.7 years.[23] Four out of 5 husbands are older than their wives. One out of 9 is 10 or more years older than his wife, and approximately 1 in 3 is from 1 to 3 years older. On the other side of the ledger, approximately 1 out of every 8 husbands is younger than his wife, although generally not much younger. Only 1 in 10 husbands is the same age as his wife. Table 8 points out some of these differentials.

Table 8[24]

MARRIED COUPLES BY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN AGE OF HUSBAND AND AGE OF WIFE; APRIL, 1949

Number of Years Husband is younger or older than wife	Married Couples with wife 18-74 years old	Per Cent
All married couples	33,274,000	100.0
10 or more years younger	150,000	.5
6 to 9 years younger	393,000	1.2
4 to 5 years younger	617,000	1.9
1 to 3 years younger	3,230,000	9.7
Same age	3,170,000	9.5
1 to 3 years older	10,916,000	32.8
4 to 5 years older	5,345,000	16.1
6 to 9 years older	5,627,000	16.9
10 or more years older	3,827,000	11.5

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 5.

[24] *Ibid.* Adapted from Table 10, p. 18.

Educational Composition of the Family

The concept of democracy implies the mass participation of the citizens in the process of government. This participation is not adequate unless the group has sufficient education to grasp the nature of the problems. The complexity of our society and the problems of the individual and the state presuppose a steadily rising level of mass education, a situation that has not been achieved evenly among various segments of the population. Our concern here is with the educational accomplishments of the members of the forty million families in the United States.

The first interesting fact is that, particularly among young girls, the chances for early marriage decrease with the length of their schooling. The chances for marriage in their teens are considerably greater for the girls who have had less, rather than more, schooling. Girls in high school and college do not, for the most part, marry while still attending school. Girls who have not continued their education beyond grammar school or the first two years of high school are bidders in the marriage market long before their more highly educated sisters.[25] This popularity of less educated girls is thus largely the result of sheer availability, since they are already potential wives and mothers when the majority of their age group are still pursuing their education. The masculine desire for superiority may also be operative in this relationship, unconsciously causing men to marry girls with less education than themselves. In any event, girls with less education—and hence less formal preparation for family adjustment in an atomic age—have more favorable opportunities for marrying young than those with more adequate preparation.

In the older age groups, the advantage still appears to be with those with less formal education, although the differences are not so pronounced. Of the total female population 25 years old and older in 1947, approximately 9 out of 10 had ever married, whereas 1 in 10 was single. Of those who had completed less than 7 years of grade school, 94 out of every 100 had married; of those who had completed 1 to 3 years of high school, 92 out of every 100 had married; 89 out of every 100 had married of those who completed 4 years of high school; whereas only 81 out of every 100 of those who had completed one or more years of college had married. The former notion that college is a training ground for spinsterhood no longer has the validity it once had. Nevertheless, it is still true that college girls marry in a ratio less than the average for the country as a whole.

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[25] Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, "Marriage and Educational Attainment," *Statistical Bulletin,* August 1945.

What has been said with respect to the female population does not apply to the male population. Of the total males in the nation 25 years old and older in 1947, 87 out of every 100 had ever married, whereas 13 out of every 100 were single. There was very little difference in these ratios on the basis of the years of school completed. Table 9 presents this picture for both males and females: [26]

Table 9

TOTAL EVER MARRIED OF PERSONS 25 YEARS OLD AND OLDER
by years of school completed and by sex—United States, April, 1947

	MALE			FEMALE		
	Total	*Total Ever Married*	*Per Cent*	*Total*	*Total Ever Married*	*Per Cent*
Grade School—under 7 years ...	9,107,000	7,930,000	87.1	8,083,000	7,579,000	93.8
Grade School—7 and 8 years	12,385,000	10,926,000	88.2	12,633,000	11,593,000	91.8
High School — 1 to 3 years	6,535,000	5,708,000	87.3	6,952,000	6,365,000	91.6
High School—4 years..	7,353,000	6,276,000	85.4	9,573,000	8,506,000	88.9
College—1 year or more	5,103,000	4,449,000	87.2	4,854,000	3,915,000	80.7
Total, 25 years and over	40,483,000	35,289,000	87.2	42,095,000	37,958,000	90.2

The girl with fewer years of school thus has a better chance of founding a family than her more highly educated sister. Furthermore, after the family has been founded, its fertility varies in inverse relationship to the educational attainment of the mother. In other words, the more education the mother has, the fewer the number of children. It has long been known that the largest families are born to those parents with less education than the average. Not so generally known is the close relationship of family fertility to the educational attainment of the mother, rather than the father. Families in which the wife has only a grade school education but the husband has one or more years of college thus have more children than those in which the reverse is true.[27]

A disproportionate share of children are therefore born to the less educated mothers. In the decade of the 1940's, however, a differential change occurred in this respect. During the period 1940 to 1947, mothers with the greatest amount of schooling (4 years of college or more) had the highest proportionate increase in the number of children under 5 years of age. In these years, the number of children in this age group per 1,000 women of reproductive age increased by approximately 30 per cent in the country as a whole. For the college women, this increase was 77 per cent, as is shown in Figure 5. In all probability, this increase was temporary and the traditional educational differential between married women in terms of fertility will continue.

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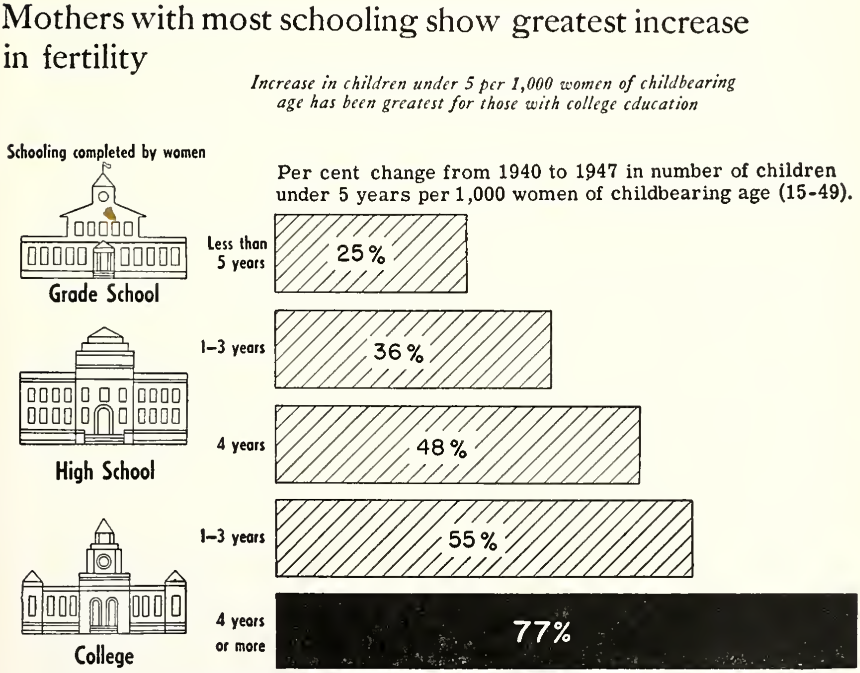
[26] Bureau of the Census, "Characteristics of Single, Married, Widowed and Divorced Persons in 1947," *Current Population Reports, Population Characteristics*, February 6, 1948, Series P-20, No. 10, Table 8.

[27] Cf. Clyde V. Kiser, *Group Differences in Urban Fertility* (Baltimore: Williams and Wilkins Company, 1942).



Source: Midcentury White House Conference on Children and Youth, op. cit., Chart 10.

Fig. 5.

Socio-Economic Composition of the Family

The socio-economic composition of the family is another contributory factor to the full understanding of the place of this institution in the American scene. Although the United States has traditionally enjoyed a middle-class ideology, class stratification is still evident, with its accompanying subcultural manifestations. Occupational differences clearly distinguish farmers, proprietors, skilled workers, unskilled workers, and professional persons. The family subcultures of these occupational groups have definite differences. Graduations based upon money income are also apparent in setting off one group from another among the 40 million families in the nation. We have already considered some of the ramifications of the class subcultures of the family in this country. We shall merely indicate here some of the occupational and financial differences that are apparent in the contemporary family.

The influence of the economic way of life upon the composition of the family is first shown by the wide variations in the proportions of the functional groups ever married. The most-married occupational group in the country comprises those classified as "proprietors, managers, and officials, except farm." Of the total employed males 14 years old and older in the country in 1947, 79.2 per cent had ever married. By contrast, 93.4 per cent of the occupational group of proprietors, managers, and officials had ever married. This group is economically solvent and able to provide the necessary cash to satisfy the consumption needs of the family. Farmers and farm managers represented the next highest group in terms of those ever married, with 87.3 per cent. Farming is a way of life that requires a wife to perform her share of the work as well as to provide companionship. Next in order were the "craftsmen, foremen, and kindred workers" with 87.1 per cent ever married, followed by the professional and semi-professional workers with 84.2 per cent.

Farm families are the most settled socio-economic group in the country, since their business is also their home and the family is an absolute necessity thereto. The other groups with high marriage rates represent those with the maximum social and economic security, who are thus presumably most directly attracted to marriage. By contrast, the most insecure occupational groups are "laborers, except farm and mine," "domestic service workers," and "farm laborers and foremen." The proportions ever married in these categories are considerably lower than for the nation as a whole. Among domestic service workers, for example, only 62.7 per cent of the males had ever married, whereas among farm laborers and foremen (the most insecure economic group of all) only 37.8 per cent had ever married. These relationships are shown in Table 10.

Table 10 [28]

TOTAL EVER MARRIED (PER CENT) OF EMPLOYED MALE PERSONS, 14 YEARS OLD AND OLDER

by Major Occupation Group, 1947

Major Occupation Group	*Total Ever Married Per Cent*
Proprietors, managers, and officials	93.4
Farmers and farm managers	87.3
Craftsmen, foremen, and kindred workers	87.1
Professional and semiprofessional workers	84.2
Operatives and kindred workers	76.1
Service workers, except domestic	75.1
Salesmen	74.0
Clerical and kindred workers	73.7
Laborers, except farm and mine	69.4
Domestic service workers	62.7
Farm laborers and foremen	37.8
Total—14 years and over—all groups	79.2

There are wide variations between the proportions of single and married persons in the several occupational fields. Married men tend to gravitate to occupations that yield high income, in preference to related occupations that yield lower incomes. Among farmers and farm managers, for example, married men outnumber single men by 6½ to 1, whereas among farm laborers single men are twice as numerous as married men. Craftsmen, foremen, and other skilled workers have a ratio of 6½ times as many married men as single men, whereas among unskilled workers the ratio is only 3½ to 1. Married men exceed single men by 14 to 1 among proprietors, managers, and officials.[29]

With the exception of farmers and farm managers, the occupational distribution of families by total money income follows roughly the marital pattern of these occupation groups. The median total income of all families in 1949 was $3,107, and that for proprietors, managers, and officials was $4,189. Professional workers had a median income per family of $4,938, whereas semiprofessional workers had only $3,750. Laborers, except farm and mine, had a median family income of $2,544, as compared with $1,491 for farm laborers and foremen. The median figure for farmers and farm managers was only $1,436, but the money income of farmers is not an adequate reflection of the economic security of farm families.[30]

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[28] Bureau of the Census, "Characteristics of Single, Married, Widowed, and Divorced Persons in 1947," *Current Population Reports, Population Characteristics, op. cit.*, adapted from Table 10.

[29] *Ibid.*, p. 5.

In this chapter, we have examined the structure of the American family in quantitative terms. We have considered the family in terms of its size, its stability, its age composition, the educational achievements of its members, the rural-urban differences in its distribution, its socio-economic features, and other aspects of this institutional segment of the American culture pattern. We shall consider the broken family in a later discussion. Emphasis has been placed here upon what the family *is*, rather than what it *does*, its forms rather than its functions. In the following chapters, we shall turn to an analysis of this second aspect of the family and shall deal with both the changing and continuing functions of this institution.

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[30] Bureau of the Census, "Income of Families and Persons in the United States: 1949," *Current Population Reports, Population Characteristics*, February 18, 1951, Series P-60, No. 7, Table 8.

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16

THE CHANGING FUNCTIONS OF THE FAMILY

THE STRUCTURE of an institution is but its bare bones. The functions put some flesh on these bones, endow them with life, and show them in action. We have considered social institutions in their generalized aspects and the family as a characteristic example thereof. We have also considered the composition of the American family from a quantitative point of view. We turn now to the activities of the contemporary family, indicating its principal functions, the extent to which some of these functions have been assumed by other institutions, and finally the extent to which others remain as the core of the continuing institution.

The Nature of Family Functions

The functions of an institution refer to the activities which it characteristically performs. A noted anthropologist defines institutional function as "the part it (the institution) plays in the total system of social integration of which it is a part. . . . The function of culture as a whole," he continues, "is to unite individual human beings into more or less stable social structures . . . providing such adaptation to the physical environment, and such internal adaptation between the component individuals or groups as to make possible an ordered life." [1] These "more or less stable social structures" are social institutions, and the functions refer to the parts played by them in the social environment which give it stability. Without a system of institutions, ordered society would be impossible.

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[1] A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, "The Present Position of Anthropological Studies," *British Association for the Advancement of Science*, Centenary Meeting, London, 1931, quoted by Everett C. Hughes, "Social Institutions," *An Outline of the Principles of Sociology*, ed. Robert E. Park (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1939), pp. 290-91.

The functions of most institutions must be considered in the plural. This is especially true of the family, whose functions were formerly so various that, in intimate cooperation with the Church, this institution dominated the life of man from the cradle to the grave. The historic family was a multifunctional institution, with affectional, biological, economic, protective, educational, recreational, religious, and status-giving functions. Until comparatively recently, the accident of birth in a particular family was probably the most important single circumstance in the life of the individual. Even with many of its functions assumed by other institutions, the functions that the family still performs indicate that it will continue to play a dominant role, both in the life of the individual and the institutional structure of our society. The functions that remain to the family are of such intrinsic importance that no other institution or combination of institutions gives promise of replacing it.[2]

The family operates in close and reciprocal relationship with the other social institutions. When these institutions change, the family eventually follows. Beginning with the second half of the eighteenth century, the Western world has witnessed several major industrial and technological revolutions, whose broad social changes have had inevitable repercussions on the family.[3] The economic, educational, recreational, religious, and protective functions have been especially modified by this sweeping series of changes. The biological, affectional, socialization, and status-giving functions have been less seriously affected and, in modified form, continue to hold the family together as the central social institution. The general process of change has been uneven, with certain segments of the family showing great changes and others less spectacular ones. The process has been most striking with the metropolitan family, whose functions are most fully divorced from those of the Colonial family. In the more isolated rural areas, the family continues to operate in many respects very much as it did 150 years ago.

Any major social crisis, such as World War II or postwar mobilization, tends to accelerate the social changes already in operation.

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[2] Cf. William F. Ogburn and Clark Tibbitts, "The Family and Its Functions," *Recent Social Trends* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1933), chap. 13. The reader will observe, in the discussion that follows, the authors' indebtedness to this classic treatment of family functions.

[3] Lawrence K. Frank, "Social Change and the Family," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, March 1932, CLX, 94-102.

World War II did not originate the employment of women, the lack of care of children, and the changing family roles resulting from the greater freedom of married women; it did, however, speed up these and other processes that had started long before. The demand for labor brought millions of additional married women into the labor force and thus increased the rapidity of change in economic functions of the family. The biological functioning in the past decade has confounded the population experts with the spectacular and differential fluctuations of the birth rate. The affectional function became even more important during the war, when millions of families either were deprived of these relationships or were threatened with their imminent loss.[4]

The Changing Production Function

One of the consequences of a rapidly changing and highly dynamic society is an inevitable lag between the mores and the changed life-conditions. In the Old World, many of the essential forms of family life were established in an agrarian economy, where the family was largely a self-contained social unit with the father as the acknowledged head. The early experience in America reinforced the rural and agricultural mores of the family and established the rural family as the norm of family life. "The prevailing ideas and attitudes," writes one authority, "held by both men and women regarding the position and sphere of women in society, and the proper organization and activities of the family and the home are largely the product of the economic and social arrangements that prevailed prior to the industrial revolution, when society was organized primarily around the home as the producing unit, and before standards of value had become so definitely identified with a price-and-profit economy." [5]

Much of the contemporary uncertainty is the result of the massive changes that have transformed the family from a rural to an urban relationship, changes that have seemed to be almost sacrilegious departures from a universally accepted rural norm. The new family inevitably violates the mores in many respects, since these mores were the accretions of a rural way of life. New mores have not yet been evolved about the rapidly changing pattern of family relationships in an urban culture.[6]

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[4] Francis E. Merrill, *Social Problems on the Home Front* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1948).

[5] Viva Boothe, "Gainfully Employed Women in the Family," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, March, 1932, CLX, 75-85.

The economic functions of the family in a predominantly agrarian society were twofold. First, the family served as a unit for the production of goods and services primarily for home consumption and only secondarily for the market. Second, the family served as a unit for the consumption of goods and services, the majority of which they provided for themselves, often with only incidental assistance from outside sources. This economy and the family admirably suited to it were characterized by virtual economic self-sufficiency and a preponderance of hand labor. There was a nice division of labor among husband, wife, and children. Work became the supreme virtue, and leisure was identified with potential degeneracy. The husband was the dominant figure, at least nominally, but the economic role of the wife was so vital that she often exercised a preponderant influence in family councils.

A profound change has taken place in the demographic scene and hence in the economic functions performed by the family. Each decade has witnessed a decreasing proportion of the population residing on the land and carrying on the traditional economic functions of the farm family. As noted in chapter 15, approximately 63 per cent of the population is now urban, with only 16 per cent in the rural-farm category.[7] Even those families that remain on the farm do not operate as they did in a handicraft economy. Labor-saving devices have been introduced, farm machinery has been improved, mechanization has been applied to many processes formerly performed by hand labor, and the unit production per worker has increased.

These technological changes in the mode of production have brought with them modifications in the economic and social functions of the farm family. As Frank points out, the traditional activity of "making a living" has partially changed to one of "earning a living," in which the farmer raises cash crops to sell in the open market.[8] The farm family is naturally not so dependent upon a cash income as the urban family. The farm family still performs its basic productive activity on the ground and hence still serves as both a production and a consumption unit. The farm family therefore continues to maintain many of the social patterns of an earlier day, even though these elements are being broken down by the cultural diffusion from urban centers.

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[6] Cf. Ernest W. Burgess and Harvey J. Locke, *The Family* (New York: American Book Company, 1945), chap. 3, "The Rural Family" and chap. 4, "The Urban Family."

[7] Bureau of the Census, "Marital Status and Household Characteristics: March, 1950," *Current Population Reports, Population Characteristics*, February 12, 1951, Series P-20, No. 33, p. 5.

[8] Frank, "Social Change and the Family," *op. cit.*, p. 95.

The majority of families, however, no longer perform this central productive function. The members of most families work for wages or salaries outside the home and make their economic contribution in ways other than directly through the family.[9] The family has become increasingly a *unit of consumption*, through which goods and services are purchased for money and within which they are consumed. Most of the baking, canning, preserving, washing, clothes-making, and similar operations formerly performed by the family have been assumed by specialized agencies outside the home. Even the outside consumption of meals has increased in recent years, as evidenced by the growing number of waiters and waitresses in proportion to the population as a whole. Bakeries and delicatessens have grown more rapidly than the population in recent decades. With the advent of frozen fruits and vegetables, pre-cooked and processed meats and foods, many of the simplest operations formerly performed in the family kitchen have been transferred to commercial agencies. Many of the traditional economic functions of the family, even in the field of consumption, have undergone considerable modification during the first half of the twentieth century.[10]

In spite of labor-saving devices and other means of simplifying housework, however, the job of homemaker is still a full-time job, especially where there are young children. Married women with small children do not leave the home to join the labor force in anything like the proportion of childless married women or older women. Although there are fewer children, the standards of child care have grown more exacting, and keeping up with the growing body of knowledge in this respect is a major task. Even in apartment-living, there is a certain amount of cleaning to be done, as well as taking care of the clothing and house furnishings. However simple and convenient the modern kitchen may be, the food must be purchased, processed, and served. In an inflationary situation and without an unlimited food budget, the homemaker should have considerable knowledge of quality and standards of food excellence, to say nothing of the multiplicity of other items purchased for the home.

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[9] Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, "Measuring Family Responsibility," *Statistical Bulletin*, May 1946.

[10] Ogburn and Tibbitts, *op. cit.*, pp. 664-72.

It is difficult to give a money-equivalent to the total services rendered by the more than 40 million homemakers of the nation. One authority estimated the total monetary contribution of the homemaker at 34 billion dollars in 1945, or about $22 for every $100 of national income.[11] In strict economic thought, no money-equivalent is possible for services for which there is no market. The fact that homemakers do perform services, however, which would be the equal of 20 per cent of the national income shows that homemaking is the Number One profession in America.

The Changing Consumption Function

The family now buys many of the commodities which it formerly grew, processed, or manufactured. Money has become the central value for the majority of families, especially for the substantial proportion that is constantly on the line between minimum subsistence and downright poverty. Indeed, it might be said with equal validity that money is a central value for all contemporary families, since they live in a society permeated so completely by its concept. "Money," says Simmel, "is . . . more than a standard of value and a means of exchange. It has a meaning and significance over and above its purely economic function. Modern society is a monetary society not merely because its economic transactions are based on money, or because its manifold aspects are influenced by money, but because it is in money that the modern spirit finds its most perfect expression." [12] As Lynd remarks in slightly different terms, "Never before has so much of a 'living' been bought." [13] In order to buy this "living," money must be had.

The family living on or below the poverty level must have money to survive. The family living on the minimum subsistence level must watch its income carefully to make both ends meet. The family on the health and decency level is interested in the money that will buy some of the small luxuries. To the family on the comfort level, money is a symbol of keeping up with the Joneses, a tangible and visible sign of hard-won social success. To the wealthy family, money has become a necessity to maintain the way of life to which it has been accustomed and which it considers its eminent right. On every income level, money has become a central value, upon which the corporate existence of the family unit is based. This development is more apparent in the urban community than in isolated rural areas; but even in the latter, money has grown increasingly important.

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[11] Margaret Reid, "The Economic Contribution of Homemakers," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, May 1947, CCLI, 61-69.

[12] Nicholas J. Spykman, *The Social Theory of Georg Simmel* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1925), p. 251.

[13] Robert S. Lynd, "Family Members as Consumers," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, March 1932, CLX, 86-93.

The division of labor in a pecuniary society, furthermore, has made the individual less dependent upon his intimate family but more dependent upon a larger number of persons with whom he has only a remote personal connection.[14] The urban husband is no longer dependent upon the labor of his wife to maintain the family economy, as is still the case in the farm family. Instead, he is dependent for his wage or salary upon millions of persons whom he does not know and of whose very existence he is only dimly aware.[15]

Although it is customary to speak of the family as the "unit" of consumption in a pecuniary economy, this concept must be qualified in view of the many purchases made by members of families acting as *individuals* rather than primarily as members of a closely knit consumption unit.[16] Such an atomistic policy involves the family in unwise expenditures, the overextension of credit, and other difficulties not present in a society where the father or mother tightly controlled the purse strings in accordance with custom. Such items as refrigerators, radios, and homes are customarily purchased by the family as a unit. Many other items in the "family" budget are, however, purchased by one or more of the individuals comprising the unit.

Income and the Consumption Function

The total money income of a family, translated into the goods and services it will purchase, is the basic measure of the economic well-being of the family in a pecuniary society. In 1950, the median family income was $3,300, or approximately 3 times the median family income for 1935–1936.[17] Even with the inflationary situation, the average family of 1950 was probably enjoying more real income than the family of 15 years before. More than 9 million families in the United States received incomes of $5,000 or more in 1950, whereas 10 million had incomes under $2,000. The remaining group of about 21 million families were in the $2,000 to $5,000 bracket.[18] During the brief period from 1944 to 1950, the median family income increased from $2,500 to $3,300, or more than 30 per cent. In the same period, the proportion of families with incomes of $5,000 and over increased from 12 per cent to 23 per cent of the total. Table 11 shows the distribution of income by families in the United States in 1950:

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[14] Spykman, *op. cit.*, p. 221.
[15] *Ibid.*, pp. 221-22.
[16] Lynd, "Family Members as Consumers," *op. cit.*, p. 86.

Table 11 [19]

NUMBER AND PER CENT OF FAMILIES

by Family Income

Family Income	*Number of Families*	*Per Cent*
Under $1,000	4,600,000	11.6
$1,000 to $1,999	5,200,000	13.1
$2,000 to $2,999	7,100,000	17.8
$3,000 to $3,999	8,200,000	20.6
$4,000 to $4,999	5,400,000	13.6
$5,000 to $5,999	3,600,000	9.0
$6,000 to $6,999	2,100,000	5.3
$7,000 to $9,999	2,300,000	5.8
$10,000 and over	1,300,000	3.3
Total	39,800,000	100.0

Three out of 5 American families thus have a total money income of $3,000 or over, and almost 1 in 4 has an income of $5,000 or over. Even discounting the purchasing power of the 1950 dollar (see below), these incomes are impressive. At the other end of the scale, approximately 1 family in 9 has a cash income of less than $1,000, a figure that would hardly satisfy the needs of a family under modern price conditions. The majority of these low-income families, however, are rural, and the figures for family income do not include farm produce consumed at home and other types of income "in kind." The median farm family income was $1,587, or about half that for all families in the country. This means that almost half of all farm families had a money income of less than $1,500. Some 34.2 per cent of all farm families reported cash incomes of less than $1,000, whereas only 6.7 per cent of all urban families had incomes as small as this.[20]

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[17] National Resources Committee, *Consumer Incomes in the United States*, Washington, 1938.

[18] Bureau of the Census, "Income of Families and Persons in the United States: 1950," *Current Population Reports, Consumer Income*, March 25, 1952, Series P-60, No. 9.

[19] Bureau of the Census, "Income of Families and Persons in the United States: 1950," *Current Population Reports, Consumer Income, op. cit.*

The discrepancy between rural and urban families, however, is not as great as these figures would suggest. In addition to the fact that farm produce consumed at home is not included as income, it is probable that many farm incomes are also under-reported. This situation arises from the difficulty of measuring net income from the operation of a farm. Hence the plight of many of the 50 per cent of all farm families with reported incomes of less than $1,500 is undoubtedly better than might be expected from the figures alone. The scale of living of most of the 6 million farm families is unquestionably higher than the median cash income of $1,587 would suggest.[21]

Since families vary so greatly in size and number of dependents, the median per capita income throws additional light upon economic status. Family income as a whole increases with the size of the family, from a median figure of $2,600 for families of 2 persons to $3,400 for families of 4, 5, or 6 persons. Income declines for larger families. The average per capita income is largest in small families, with a median figure of $1,300 in 2 person families and decreasing to $500 or less per person in families with 7 or more persons.[22] As an indication of economic well-being, this figure is still further qualified by the fact that living costs per member are lower in large families than in small ones. Other variables, such as type and location of family, also have a bearing on these comparisons.

It is customary in cost-of-living analyses to compare current price levels of goods and services with those prevailing in 1935–1939. In popular parlance, this comparison has been described in terms of a 53-cent dollar. This simply means that, as a consequence of inflation, the 1950 dollar purchased in goods and services slightly more than one-half of what it did in 1939. It required, therefore, almost twice as many inflated dollars to maintain the same standards of consumption as the average family needed in 1939.

[20] Bureau of the Census, "Income of Families and Persons in the United States, 1949," *Current Population Reports, Consumer Income*, February 18, 1951, Series P-60, No. 7, pp. 2, 20.

[21] *Ibid.*, Table 1.

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 3.

In the period from 1939 to 1949, the money income of the average employee more than doubled, increasing from about $800 to $2,000. The median income for white males increased from $1,100 to $2,700, and that for white females from $700 to $1,600. The wage workers showing the greatest gains were in agriculture, mining, construction, and manufacturing, and smallest gains were recorded in the "white-collar" industries.[23] Families in general have thus improved their economic position as consumption units during the past decade and real income is greater than it was before World War II. Families of "white-collar" workers and those on fixed incomes from pensions, annuities, and the like have felt the worst of the inflationary pinch.

The industrial organization of the United States depends upon mass production and mass markets. Apart from the small proportion of this productivity which goes into world trade, the continued development of mass production depends on the ability of millions of American families to buy and pay for the output of farm and factory. The economic prosperity of the nation therefore depends on the effectiveness of the family as a consumption unit to absorb the products of an industrial society. Total family money income is largely the key to this effectiveness, and hence families as a whole have improved their real income and economic wellbeing in recent years. Many families still exist in which money income is far from adequate for a satisfactory standard of living. The goal of equality of economic opportunity is far from a reality. The important consideration, however, is the direction in which the society is moving. It cannot be gainsaid that the economic wellbeing of the family has improved in the past two decades.

The Employment of Married Women

In our discussion of the economic functions of the family, attention was called to the increasing number of women who are making their contribution outside rather than inside the family. We may now consider this trend in more detail, and see how the office and the factory, rather than the four walls of the home, have come to determine the activities of a larger number of women, both married and unmarried. In 1900, approximately 5,000,000 women were gainfully employed outside the home; by 1930, this number had increased to almost 11,000,000; and by 1952, the figure approached 19,000,000.

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[23] *Ibid.*, p. 9.

The peak employment of women occurred in 1945 when more than 19,500,000 were in the civilian labor force, or in excess of 1 in every 3 workers.[24] The effects of this general trend upon the family, its relationships and roles, are literally incalculable.

Even more directly affecting the economic functioning of the family is the number of *married* women in the labor force. In the period from 1910 to 1951, this number increased from less than 2,000,000 to more than 9,000,000, or almost 5 times. The number of women in the population increased for the same period by less than two times. In 1940, the proportion of employed *married* women to all married women was less than 15 per cent; in 1950, about 24 per cent of all married women were in the labor force. Before World War II, the number of single women in the labor force exceeded the number of married, but this situation was reversed by 1950.[25] The proportion of employed single women to *all* single women is about 50 per cent, or double the proportion that prevails in the married group. The accompanying Figure 6 shows both the relative and absolute increases in the employment of married women during the past four decades.

Prior to World War II, about 1 in 6 married women was in the labor force; by 1950 the proportion had increased to almost 1 in 4. In spite of this tremendous increase in the over-all employment of married women, the labor force participation of married women in their 20's and early 30's increased only slightly. The bulk of the increase came from the middle and older age groups. Young children in the home continue to act as strong deterrents to the employment of married women. Mothers of children of preschool age are therefore less likely than other women to be gainfully employed. Mothers of children of school age are less likely to join the labor force than those with no children under 18. In 1950, only 11.9 per cent of the mothers with preschool-age children were gainfully employed, as compared with 28.3 per cent of the mothers with school-age children, and 30.3 per cent of those with no children under 18.[26]

Married women are popularly assumed to work because they prefer

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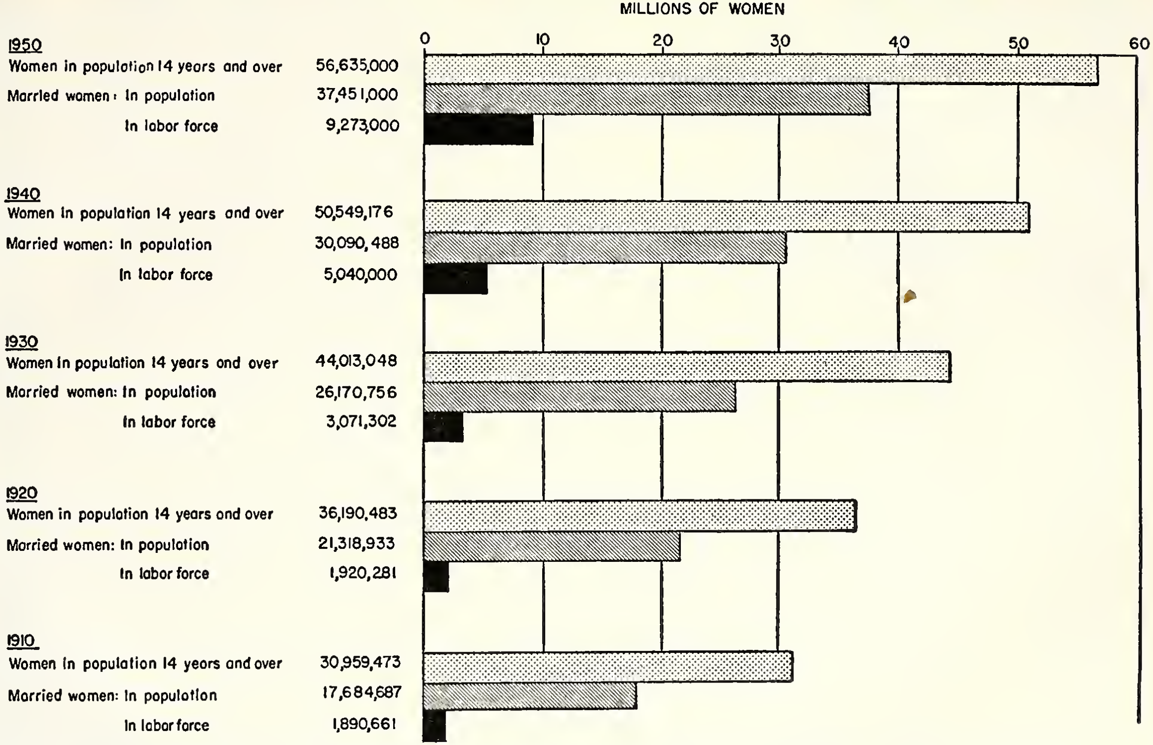
[24] Women's Bureau, United States Department of Labor, 1952 *Handbook of Facts on Women Workers*, Bulletin No. 242 (Washington, 1952), p. 1.

[25] Bureau of the Census, "Marital and Family Characteristics of the Labor Force in the United States; March, 1950," *Current Population Reports, Labor Force*, May 2, 1951, Series P-50, No. 29.

[26] *Ibid.*, p. 2.

MARRIED WOMEN IN POPULATION & IN LABOR FORCE 1910 - 1950



Source: Prepared by United States Department of Labor, Women's Bureau, from data supplied by the Bureau of the Census.

Fig. 6.

a career to the solid responsibilities of family life. The assumption is not true, in view of the types of work performed by the majority of married women. Less than 1 in 9 employed married women is in the professional and semiprofessional group; 1 in 3 is in the group of clerical, sales, and kindred workers; 1 in 5 in the group of operatives and kindred workers; and 1 in 4 in the group of service workers.[27]

The Women's Bureau of the United States Department of Labor made an analysis of about 240 studies of women workers and their dependents. The Bureau found that "most frequently half or well over half of the women at work in all types of occupation consider themselves in some degree responsible for dependents (in addition, of course, to supporting themselves). . . . The proportion of women who contribute to dependents ordinarily is largest among those widowed or divorced, next among the married, and smallest among single women. Nevertheless, in most of the studies reporting on marital status at least a third, and in some cases over half, of the single women were contributing to dependents." [28]

Single employed women are more likely to be supporting adults, such as mothers, fathers, sisters or brothers, whereas married women are likely to be supporting children. Many married women, however, also have adult dependents, such as parents and occasionally husbands. From one-tenth to one-fourth of women workers reported in the above studies were the *only* earners contributing to the support of their families. Less than 1 woman in 10 gives none of her earnings to her family. Conversely, from one-third to two-thirds of all women workers give *all* of their earnings to family support.[29]

From these lines of evidence, it is clear that married women work from necessity rather than to express their personalities or enjoy a glamorous professional career. Whereas about 1 married woman in 4, whose husband was present, was in the labor force in 1950, more than 1 in 3 of those widowed, divorced, or living apart from their husbands were gainfully employed. Almost 2 out of 3 in this latter category were in the labor force if they had dependent children 6 to 17 years of age. If they had children under six, only about 2 out of 5 were working.[30]

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[27] *Ibid.* Adapted from Table 5, p. 8.

[28] Mary-Elizabeth Pidgeon, *Women Workers and Their Dependents*, Women's Bureau, United States Department of Labor, Bulletin No. 239, (Washington, 1952), p. 3.

[29] *Ibid.*, pp. 4, 5.

Furthermore, in those families with husband present and wife working, the contributions of the wives constituted no small part of the family's total income. Where the husband's income was in the lower brackets, the activity of the wife doubled the family income; at higher income levels, the proportionate contribution of the wife's earning naturally was less. About one-half of the families with working wives had incomes of $4,000 or more, whereas only one-third of the families in which the wife did not work had this much income.[31] Table 12 shows the relative importance of the wife's contribution to the family at different income levels.

Table 12 [32]

INCOME OF HUSBAND BY LABOR FORCE STATUS OF WIFE

April, 1951

Income of Husband	*Per Cent of Wives in Labor Force*
Under $1,000	28
$1,000 to $2,000	29
$2,000 to $3,000	28
$3,000 to $4,000	27
$4,000 to $5,000	21
$5,000 to $6,000	16
$6,000 to $10,000	11
$10,000 and over	12

Where children are involved, a considerable change in family role accompanies this migration from the home to the office, store, factory, or classroom. Working mothers are often unable to provide satisfactory supervision for their children, since they cannot afford nursery schools or similar services. Many of the children "run wild" on the streets, where they may come into contact with undesirable influences. They are deprived of the sympathetic understanding of a mother when they need it most. There is little time for the children even in the hours the working mother spends in the home, for this is the only time she has for cooking, cleaning, and other activities. Many of the functions ordinarily performed by the mother therefore are not performed at all or, in some instances, are performed by children who thereby overtax both their psychic and their physical energy.[33] When the full-time job of homemaker with children is complicated by working for wages, there is a profound modification of the maternal role.

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[30] Bureau of the Census, "Marital and Family Characteristics of the Labor Force in the United States: March, 1950," *op. cit.*, Table 4, p. 8.

[31] Bureau of the Census, "Income of Families and Persons in the United States: 1950," *Current Population Reports, Consumer Income*, March 25, 1952, Series P-60, No. 9, p. 4.

[32] *Ibid.*, Table J, p. 11.

The Educational Function

The change from an agrarian to an urban industrial society has resulted in a corresponding change in the family, from a production and consumption unit to a consumption unit with chief emphasis on the money income. The same basic social changes have affected greatly the educational function of the family. In a simpler social structure, children were taught in the family circle the skills with which they were later to earn a living. Since the boy would probably follow in his father's footsteps and become a farmer, the knowledge essential to carry on this occupation could best be attained in the school of practical experience. Similarly, since the major life-work of the girl would be that of wife and homemaker, the home itself was an adequate training ground for this career. A minimum of formal schooling was essential in such a social system. Knowledge of the cultural heritage was best supplied by the family, aided by the church.

A distinction should be made here between education in its broadest sense and the formal education associated with the schools. The most significant influences shaping the personality occur during the earliest years of life; in this sense, the educational function of the family is supremely important. For this is the period in the life span of the individual when his major social relationships are familial. In a subsequent chapter, attention will be given to this continuing function of education, considered as socialization. At this point we are concerned with the extent to which the schools have taken over certain educative services formerly performed by the family.

The extent of this trend is evidenced by: (a) the increased number of children attending school; (b) the median number of years of completed schooling; (c) the increase in the number of days per year children are in school; and (d) the changing conception of its task by the school. In 1951, there were 18 million children from 7 to 13 years of age in school, or about 99 per cent of this age group. In the age group 14 to 17 years, 85 per cent were enrolled in school, although after this age the percentage declines sharply. In the 18-19 year group, the percentage in school drops to 26.2, and in the age group 20-24 the percentage shows the most drastic decline of all to 8.6.[34]

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[33] United States Department of Labor, Children's Bureau, *Supervised Homemaker Service*, Bureau Publication No. 296 (Washington, 1943), pp. 3-4.

A significant educational increase in the high school age group (14-17 years) occurred in the period from 1945-1951, when the proportion enrolled in schools increased from 78.4 per cent to 85.2 per cent. The enrollment of males in higher education (20-24 years) showed violent fluctuations in the postwar years. This rate increased from 5.6 per cent of the total age group in 1945 to a high point of 17.0 per cent in 1947, only to decline to 14.3 per cent in 1951. This fluctuation reflected changes in the number eligible for the educational benefits of the veterans of World War II under the so-called "GI Bill of Rights." [35]

Data on the other aspects of educational trends are somewhat less recent than those for school enrollment. In 1947, the median number of school years completed by all persons then in the age group 25-34 years was approximately 12 years. For the age group 35-44, the comparable figure was about 10 years, and for the age group 45-54 it was about 8 years.[36] This is a striking indication of the rapid increase in the average amount of formal schooling during the lifetime of persons now living. Those in the younger group have had, on the average, about 4 years of completed schooling more than the older members of the population. An increasing amount of time is also being spent in school every year. From 1900 to 1948, the average number of days attended per enrolled pupil in the elementary and secondary schools increased from 99 to 155 days.[37]

Child psychologists, nursery school teachers, and others professionally competent in the field suggest that the child is ready for a group experience at the age of two. In an earlier day when large families were the rule, this experience was provided by the siblings in the family. Small families, and especially one-child families, are unable to provide this experience spontaneously. Hence they seek to give the child a group experience in the nursery school, where good language habits may be built up and adjustment with the peer group encouraged. The number of children engaged in this precocious group experience is still statistically rather small. The Bureau of the Census lists only children enrolled in kindergarten, with 574,000 five-year olds in this category in 1951. This number represented 18.9 per cent of the five-year old age group.[38]

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[34] Bureau of the Census, "School Enrollment: October 1951," *Current Population Reports: Population Characteristics*, July 21, 1952, Series P-20, No. 40.

[35] *Ibid.*

[36] Bureau of the Census, "Characteristics of Single, Married, Widowed, and Divorced Persons in 1947," *Current Population Reports: Population Characteristics*, February 5, 1948, Series P-20, No. 10, Table 8.

[37] *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1951* (Washington, 1952), p. 112.

A final aspect of the changing educational relationship of the family and the school is the new and enlarged conception of its role held by the latter institution. The traditional conception of public school education was that of handing on the cultural heritage in the form of tool-subjects and special skills. The latter were intended to enhance the adjustment of the individual in the outside world, with special emphasis upon earning a living. In recent years, this concept has broadened appreciably to include education of the "whole person" in the emotional and psychological, as well as the strictly intellectual, sense. Schools have established elaborate counseling services, which deal with the emotional adjustments and maladjustments of the pupils. Many advanced school systems have extensive adjustment services, staffed with psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers. Visiting teachers investigate the home environment of the student and attempt to relate his progress in school to his home situation. In these and many other respects, the school supplements still more the broad educational function formerly performed by the family.[39]

The Religious Function

The Christian religion, with its accompanying value-system, has long been a prominent part of the American culture pattern. The family continues to play a strategic role in the transmission of these values to the child. It is in the family, says the White House Conference on Children in a Democracy, that the child "is first introduced to the religious inheritance of his particular religious group into which he is born, as he is introduced to his mother tongue and to other aspects of his particular culture. Here the foundations are laid for the moral standards that are to guide his conduct through life." [40] In the orderly life of the family, the child acquires both a realization of the orderliness of the universe and an understanding of the integrity of the individual. It is frequently not so much a matter of formal teaching as of participating in a group in which religious values are of vital concern. That parent who possesses inner security founded on the integration of his life around ethical or religious concepts tends to pass on to his children the kind of trust that is essential to individual well-being.[41]

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[38] Bureau of the Census, "School Enrollment: October, 1951," *Current Population Reports: Population Characteristics, op. cit.*, Table 2.

[39] Federal Security Agency, Office of Education, *Health Services in City Schools*, Bulletin No. 20 (Washington, 1952).

We have considered the role of religion in American culture, in so far as it is related to the broad cultural patterns which the family assimilates. It is therefore unnecessary to consider here the changing religious functions of the family in any great detail, beyond indicating that many of the same factors that have brought about the declining role of the family in other fields have applied with equal force to the religious function. These changes have not been uniform in the different sections of the country or among various denominations. In general, the declining importance of the family as a religious institution has been an urban rather than a rural phenomenon and a Protestant rather than a Catholic one (see below). As with many other generalizations on American society, regional, ethnic, class, and other subcultural differences must be considered and the generalizations amended accordingly.[42]

An investigation of the declining religious function of the Protestant family was conducted some years ago under the auspices of an earlier White House Conference. The degree of family participation in 4 types of religious activity was studied: church attendance, grace at meals, group Bible reading, and prayers and devotions. The average family participated in these activities roughly in the order named —with church attendance first and devotional exercises last. The only activity participated in by more than half of the families (85 per cent of the rural and 40 per cent of the urban) was church attendance. Only 22 per cent of the rural and 10 per cent of the urban families reported cooperative reading of the Bible; 38 per cent of the rural and 30 per cent of the urban families engaged regularly in family grace before meals. The day when the average Protestant family operated as a formal religious unit has clearly passed.[43]

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[40] *White House Conference on Children in a Democracy*, Children's Bureau Publication No. 272 (Washington, 1942), pp. 185-86.

[41] Midcentury White House Conference on Children and Youth, *A Healthy Personality for Every Child, Fact Finding Report, a Digest* (Raleigh, N. C.: Health Publications Institute, Inc., 1951), pp. 53 ff.

[42] Cf. Rex A. Skidmore and Anthon S. Cannon, *Building Your Marriage* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1951), chap. 7, "Religion and Marriage."

A recent study of the Catholic family indicates that religious instruction provided by this institution likewise does not measure up to "traditional expectations," either in terms of knowledge of prayers or understanding of religious dogma. An attempt was made to distinguish the religious training provided by the family from that later supplemented by the parochial school by studying the background of the child at the time he entered the Catholic school. It was found, for example, that only in the observance dealing with the Sign of the Cross did more than one-half (52.9 per cent) of the children have the expected home training. In terms of such traditional elements of the Catholic theology as the Lord's Prayer, the "Hail Mary," and Grace at Meals, one-third or less of the children showed the expected amount of home training.[44]

In the understanding of Catholic dogma, less than one-third (30.6 per cent) of the preschool children could explain the meaning of the Crucifix, which is the most universal of Roman Catholic symbols. On such matters as the story of Adam and Eve and the story of Creation, only 13.1 and 24.9 per cent of the children respectively demonstrated even the most rudimentary understanding. The author of the study indicates that the results are open to possible criticism on the ground that they stress formal knowledge at the expense of "motivation and religious 'outlook.'" He counters this implied criticism, however, by pointing out the formal and organized character of the Roman Catholic faith and practice and suggests that "where there is no formal knowledge there is little religious training."[45] The general conclusion of the author, a member of the Society of Jesus, is that "The religious training of the preschool child at home as measured by the ten items employed in the present study falls far short of traditional expectations."[46]

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[43] Ernest W. Burgess, ed., *The Adolescent in the Family* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1934), pp. 171-72.

[44] John L. Thomas, S.J., "Religious Training in the Roman Catholic Family," *American Journal of Sociology*, September 1951, LVII, 178-83.

[45] *Ibid.*, p. 183.

The Recreational Function

The broad social changes that have influenced the family are likewise apparent in the recreation function. In a simple agrarian society, the family served as the central unit for the recreation of its members. In rural sections, it is still possible to find families who can take the fiddle, the hand organ, and the harmonica and literally make their own fun for themselves and their neighbors. In the modern urban family, however, the type of work done by members of the family is so different that their interests are widely varied in satisfying their respective needs for re-creation. This individual-centered rather than family-centered need for recreation has combined with a rapid decrease in the hours of labor and the growth in labor-saving devices to produce a great proliferation of commercial agencies catering to such wants. In competition with commercial agencies, the family runs a poor second in the satisfaction of its members' need for recreation.

In the aforementioned study of the adolescent in the family, an attempt was made to discover the approximate extent of the decline in the recreational function of the family. A representative sample of rural and urban children was asked how much time each spent at home with the family in the evening and what he did there. The children reported that approximately two-thirds of the time at home was spent either reading or studying (this was before the advent of television).[47] Such evenings are spent physically in the family circle, but the family hardly acts as a recreational unit on these occasions. The child therefore looks forward eagerly to evenings spent away from home, for they are the occasions when something really exciting happens. These latter and more stimulating activities are largely carried on with members of the child's age group, rather than with his parents.[48]

Recreation is a universal human need, but only since the early years of the present century has organized recreation been considered as a social and community responsibility. The growth in the implementation of the democratic credo made the offering of community recreational facilities as logical as equal access to education. Urbanization and industrialization have also been factors promoting this trend, since the urban family cannot make adequate provision either in space or in facilities for recreation in the home.[49]

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[46] *Ibid.*, p. 182.

[47] Burgess, *The Adolescent in the Family*, pp. 163-69.

[48] David Riesman, *The Lonely Crowd* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950).

Public recreation has therefore become big business. In 1948, reports from 1,673 communities showed a total of 32,314 separate recreation centers, including playgrounds, recreation buildings, athletic fields, bathing beaches, swimming pools, camps, golf courses, picnic areas, and other facilities. The amount expended for public recreational facilities and services in 1948 was approximately $100,000,000, or nearly double the comparable figure for 1946.[50] Commercial and public agencies have thus combined to take much of the recreational function out of the bosom of the family.

The Protective Function

The historic family was the central institution by which the individual was protected against the exigencies of life, so far as that was humanly possible. In helpless infancy, in childhood and adolescence, in old age, in sickness and unemployment—under all conditions where the unaided resources of the individual were inadequate, the family functioned as best it could. This protection took the varied forms of physical care, shelter, food, and the spiritual solace which is as necessary as the physical. As the nation grew more industrialized and urbanized, it became impossible for the family to carry this manifold burden. Many of its cares were taken over by three types of protective agencies—the private insurance companies, the private social agencies, and the welfare and insurance programs operated by local, state, and federal governments. The first two developments have been under way for several decades. The third, in its federal aspects at least, developed for the most part after 1935.

The change in family facilities for caring for the aged and infirm represents a significant modification in the traditional protective function. The sheer limitations of space present a problem. The small city apartment does not allow of a bedroom for the old folks. In a predominantly consumption economy, there are no productive chores whereby the old people can have a sense of participation in the family economy. In a society in which family competition for higher standards of living is keen, families are either unwilling or unable to assume the financial burden of the aged. From such changes in the family way of life, the old people are the most tragic sufferers.

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[49] For a statement of the trends in public recreation, cf. Bradley Buell, ed., "Recreation for Everybody," *Survey*, Special Section, February 1946, LXXXII, 41-56.

[50] Charles K. Brightbill, "Recreation," *Social Work Year Book 1951* (New York: American Association of Social Workers, 1951).

The financial protection afforded by private insurance is satisfactory for those who can afford it, and endowment policies taken out by men in the middle- and upper-income brackets provide ample protection for their old age. The majority of men and women are unable to make such private provision for their old age, however, no matter how thrifty they may be during their productive years. Before the passage of the Social Security Act in 1935, it was estimated that 65 per cent of all persons over 65 years of age were dependent upon the the state, private charity, or their friends and families. Only 35 per cent were financially independent.

The American family has done its best to provide protection through life insurance. At the present time, approximately 4 out of 5 families own some life insurance, which makes it the most popular form of thrift and protection in the country.[51] At the end of 1950, the total life insurance owned by American families amounted to 234 billions, which was double the figure for 1940.[52] In the period from 1900 to 1950, the number of policy-holders increased eightfold, whereas the general population merely doubled during the same period. Even in the face of this staggering increase both in the distribution and amount of insurance, the needs of the American family for protection are still so great that private methods are not sufficient.[53]

This situation, as noted, is most acute with the aged. From 1900 to 1950, the number of persons in the population 65 years of age and over increased from 3 to 12 million. This represented a fourfold increase, whereas the population as a whole increased twofold. The proportion of this age group increased from 4 to 8 per cent of the population during the 50-year period under review. These changes are shown in Figure 7. Furthermore, there has been a long-term trend toward decreasing the number and proportion of older persons considered employable in a high-speed, mechanized, and industrial society. First depression and then inflation have still further threatened the economic position of millions of old persons living on savings, insurance, or the bounty of their families.

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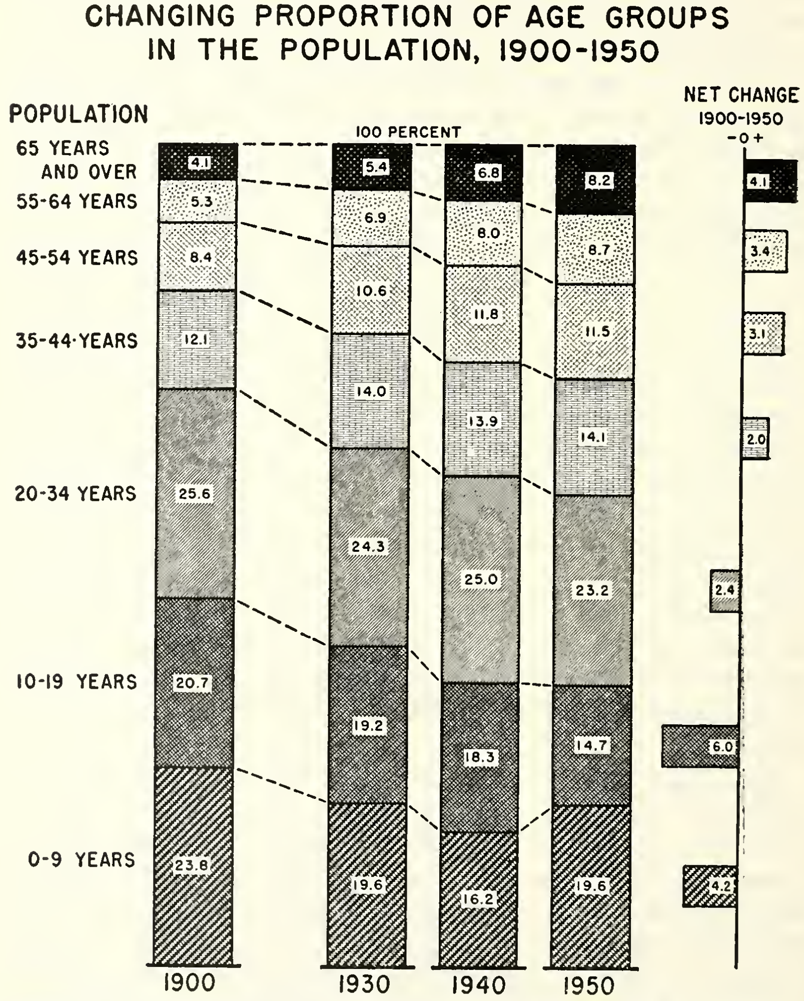
[51] Institute of Life Insurance, *Life Insurance Fact Book,* New York, 1951, p. 7.
[52] *Ibid.*, p. 5.
[53] *Ibid.*, p. 9.



Source: United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment and Economic Status of Older Men and Women, *Bulletin No. 1092 (May, 1952).*

Fig. 7.

The problem of protection for the aged was first met on a federal scale by the passage of the Social Security Act of 1935. Two situations had to be faced at this time. The first was what to do about the then dependent aged. The second was the increase in the number of the aged, both absolutely and relatively. These two problems were approached through: (a) joint federal-state programs for direct grants-in-aid to present needy aged; (b) an old-age insurance program to which both employer and employee would contribute.

The present assistance program is administered by the individual states, aided by contributions from the federal government after the latter has approved the state provisions for eligibility and administration. The federal share is computed by an elaborate formula, the maximum individual federal grant being $50 monthly, which was increased by $5 by amendment of July 1952. For the past several years, approximately 2,700,000 individuals 65 and over have been receiving monthly old-age assistance checks. The average amount of such checks is $43 for the country as a whole, and ranges from $76 in Colorado to $18 in Mississippi. The over-all federal share of old-age assistance costs in 1950 was 54 per cent, but in individual states it ranged from 75 per cent to 39 per cent.[54] For the people 65 and over in 1950, less than 1 in 3 had income from employment and 1 in 4 was the recipient of benefits from old-age and suvivors insurance.[55] This, briefly, is the short-range approach to the problem.

The long-range solution to the problem of an aging population is provided by an old-age insurance program. This is one feature of the social security program centralized in the federal government. It is financed by means of a wage and payroll tax on all covered employment, divided equally between employers and employees. The original intent was to insist that each industrial worker make provision for his own old age. By the Amendments of 1939, Old Age Insurance became Old Age and Survivors Insurance. This was a recognition that society is interested not only in the dependency of the wage earner but also in the possible widow, dependent children, or dependent parents. It is the *family*, as well as the individual, that needs protection. The worker on retirement is now eligible to a monthly benefit based on his average monthly wages.

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[54] Wilbur J. Cohen, "Income Maintenance for the Aged," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, January 1952, CCLXXIX, 154-63.

[55] U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Employment and Economic Status of Older Men and Women*, May 1952, Bulletin No. 1092.

This is the largest insurance business in the country. As a result of changes since the initial legislation, approximately 3 out of 4 workers of the nation are now covered. The chief groups not yet covered are farmers, seasonal and migratory farm workers, domestic workers employed on a day basis, and persons covered under other government retirement systems. At the end of 1951, some 4.4 million people were receiving old-age and survivors insurance benefits. More than 3 million were aged persons, 800,000 were children, and 200,000 were widowed mothers of the children receiving benefits.[56] The payroll deduction rate effective in 1954, 2 per cent each for both employer and employee, will gradually increase to 3.25 per cent each in 1970.

The Old Age and Survivors Insurance will do much to alleviate the plight of the child left dependent by the premature death of the family wage earner. Prior to 1935, many states had faced this problem with the so-called "mother's pension" laws aimed at keeping mothers and dependent children together as families. As in the case of the aged, the federal legislation of 1935 attacked the immediate problem of needy mothers with dependent children, as well as the long-range situation. To meet the current need, states submitting approved laws were to be granted federal matching funds. In June 1950, more than 1,600,000 dependent children in 650,000 families were receiving monthly grants under this joint federal-state program.

In other ways the protective functions of the family have shifted from the individual family to the larger society. The federal-state programs for aid to the needy blind and for maternal and child health illustrate this transfer. The rapid growth of institutions for the care of the feeble-minded and the mentally ill has still further relieved the family of a burden which it formerly carried. Until very recently, the family was almost the only refuge for these and other unfortunates. For the most part, these functions are taken from the family and entrusted to the state and federal governments. The family is well rid of them. Both the patients and the other members of the family benefit from such a transfer of the protective function.

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[56] Cohen, "Income Maintenance for the Aged," *op. cit.*, p. 159.

Cf. also Federal Security Agency, *A Report on Old Age and Survivors Insurance: after Fifteen Years; 1937–1951*, April 1952, Washington.

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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS, *Employment and Economic Status of Older Men and Women*, May 1952, Bulletin No. 1092. Washington, 1952. Here are provided answers to "questions arising from the effect of population, employment, and economic trends on the older age groups in the population."

17

THE CONTINUING FUNCTIONS OF THE FAMILY

We have considered the changing functions of the family as an economic, educational, recreational, religious, and protective institution, functions which it is gradually losing, at least in the sense in which they were formerly performed. This loss is a highly relative matter which varies from rural to urban areas and among various religious, ethnic, and cultural groups. Many native-born families in isolated rural areas still carry on the traditional functions much as they did a half century ago. Many foreign-born families in the metropolitan areas maintain the patriarchal mores of a peasant society in the Old World, in which the ancient functions are still strong. But the majority of families have experienced at least some diminution in these traditional functions and will apparently continue to do so in the future. How then is it possible to justify the existence of the family in its present form?

The Survival Value of the Family

The answer lies in the continuance of the basic functions which the family alone can adequately provide. These are the biological, affectional, status-conferring, and socializing functions, which are necessary to the perpetuation of the species and the transmission of the cultural heritage from the old to the young. These activities comprise the pragmatic sanction of the family and make it biologically and morally certain that no other institutional relationship in the conceivable future will take its place. People who complain of the alleged "decline" of the family are clearly thinking in terms of the changes currently taking place in its traditional functions. To conclude, however, that the family is about to be superseded by some other relationship is to misinterpret completely the nature of these changes.

The family is here to stay. The rocks upon which it will rest today, tomorrow, and for many tomorrows are those of procreation, affection, status, and socialization. Children will continue to be born—not as numerously as formerly but still in adequate numbers to continue the species—in the relationship of the family. The sanctions of society are not likely to be extended to any other framework of reproduction in the proximate future. The search for affection in an increasingly difficult world will continue to find expression in marriage, where, particularly in the middle and later years, the quiet companionship of husband and wife has no parallel.

The stress upon the affectional aspect of marriage will tend to make many individual marriages unstable, especially when there are no longer the strong institutional reasons for remaining with the initial partner. But men and women show no sign of wishing to remain permanently isolated from the blessed state of matrimony, even after an initial rupture in their marital relationship—quite the contrary, in fact. Membership in the primary group of the family will likewise continue to place the individual in relation to other individuals and groups. Finally, the socialization function performed by the family—the informal education of the child in the basic culture and the personal interaction whereby the child becomes a human being—will continue as a central activity of the family of the future. Despite the jeremiads of the amateur prophets, the family is far from moribund.

The Biological Function

The central function of the family, both in terms of historical development and contemporary importance, is that of providing a socially sanctioned relationship for the procreation, birth, and postnatal care of children. The family forms the social setting within which children are born in sufficient numbers and with adequate regularity to insure the continuance of humanity. This biological function is the cornerstone of the family, as well as that for which we have the most precise and extensive information. The trends in the birth rate from year to year—through depression, boom, total war, and postwar transition—are the most tangible expression of the biological function of the family.

Although there is obviously nothing about the biological processes of procreation, pregnancy, and parturition requiring the marriage ceremony as a prerequisite, the family maintains a virtual monopoly upon this function. For all practical purposes, each generation is born and reared under the protecting cloak of the family. This family monopoly on childbearing is enforced by many of the major patterns of American society. The state bases its elaborate mechanism of inheritance upon the concept of legal marriage, and the Church is even more insistent that the necessary ceremonies be observed before a child is brought into the world. The school also does its part in inculcating the taboos against the performance of the biological function without benefit of clergy or secular agency. Finally, the whole force of public opinion is united in praising the child born in the family and in complicating the life of the one born outside it. The biological function is firmly rooted upon this unassailable foundation of public opinion, and no probable revolution in the mores is apt to dislodge it.[1]

Although the biological function is still vested in the family, it is not performed as vigorously as in the early days of this country. Reliable figures for the birth rate of the United States have been available only for the past twenty years, but it is nevertheless possible to arrive at estimates of the rates prevailing at the time of the founding fathers. According to Lotka, each fertile wife in the Revolutionary era bore an average of eight children, which is approximately double that of her descendant in 1940.[2] The birth rate in the Western world has been declining for many decades, and that of the United States is no exception to this general trend. The reasons for the change in this country are extremely complex. They range from the urbanization of the family, through the added economic burden of children, to the desire to maintain a higher scale of living at the expense of a larger family. These factors are an integral part of the social changes taking place during the past century and a half, which have modified the traditional family functions. The biological function has not escaped.

The expression of the biological function has declined in terms of the crude birth rate. Nevertheless, the net increment to the family is greater than the secular trend in the birth rate would suggest. This is to be explained by a corresponding decline in the death rate, of which the most spectacular manifestation is in infant mortality. Colonial wives were worn out at an early age with incessant childbearing. This excessive exercise of the biological function, however, did not yield the expected population increase because of the correspondingly high death rates. Thanks to advances in medicine, sanitation, and child care, the modern family no longer needs to bring as many children into the world as was formerly the case. More children survive today than ever before. The effects of these advances upon the members of the family have been tremendous. Millions of women have been emancipated from the burden of continuous pregnancy and childbearing and have taken their places as individuals in the family and in the world.

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[1] Cf. Robert F. Winch, *The Modern Family* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1952), chap. 5, "The Reproductive Function."

[2] A. J. Lotka, "The Size of American Families in the Eighteenth Century," *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, June 1927, XXII, 167, quoted by Winch, *ibid.*, p. 117.

These modifications of the biological function have not been uniform throughout the United States. Considerable differences exist among the various regions and classes, with native-born families in the rural areas consistently more fertile than those in the cities. This relative difference between city and farm decreased during World War II and the immediate postwar years, as the birth rates among the urban middle classes underwent a substantial differential increase.[3] As the techniques of contraception and the accompanying attitudes of social acceptance become more widely disseminated, furthermore, the birth rate of the rural areas may be expected to decrease. The disparity between the rural and urban family in fertility may, however, continue for some time. The rural family will be slow to modify its traditional organization.

The net reproduction rate is a convenient measuring rod of the performance of the biological function. This rate represents the replacement potential of a given population. For a population to reproduce itself exactly, it is necessary to have each present female of reproductive age (15-49) replaced by a female child who in turn will survive to reproductive age. Expressed another way, the net reproduction rate is found by calculating whether a sufficient number of daughters are being born to produce a sufficient number of survivors to replace the women of childbearing age. If the number of daughters who survive to the age of their mothers (age at the time the daughter was born) is exactly equal to the number of women in the present generation, this ratio is 1.[4]

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[3] Bureau of the Census, "Marital Fertility: April, 1949," *Current Population Reports: Population Characteristics*, February 3, 1950, Series P-20, No. 27, Tables 1, 2.

A ratio of 1.0 is thus equivalent to exact replacement; a ratio of 1.10 represents a 10 per cent increase in a generation; a ratio of .90 represents a population decline of 10 per cent. Table 13 represents the performance of the biological function from 1935 to 1949; the net reproduction figures are expressed not in units but in thousands.

Table 13 [5]

NET REPRODUCTION RATE, UNITED STATES, 1935–1949

Year	*Net Reproduction Rate*	*Year*	*Net Reproduction Rate*
1935	975	1943	1233
1936	962	1944	1171
1937	980	1945	1144
1938	1011	1946	1359
1939	992	1947	1524
1940	1023	1948	1462
1941	1076	1949	1474
1942	1190		

In the years when American society was recovering from the depression of the early 1930's, the biological function of the family was being performed at a rate not even sufficient for replacement. In 1940 and every year thereafter, this function has been discharged very well. If the figure for 1947 (1524) were continued, this would represent an increase of 50 per cent in a single generation.

The fluctuations in the birth rate follow (approximately one year later) the fluctuations in the marriage rate. The marriage rate of 16.4 per 1,000 population in 1946 was the highest of the century; it was followed in 1947 by a birth rate of 25.8, the highest in 25 years. The marriage rate has gone down regularly since 1946, with the exception of a slight reversal associated with the outbreak of hostilities in Korea. In 1951 the marriage rate was estimated at 10.4, or a decline of 37 per cent from the peak of 1946. The *birth rate* showed no comparable decline, and in 1951 was only 8 per cent lower than in the peak year of 1947. In the first 9 months of 1952, marriage licenses were issued at the rate of 10.0 per 1,000 population, or a decline of more than 6 per cent from the first 9 months of 1951. For this same 9 months period, however, there was no change in the birth rate, the figure being 24.6 for both years.[6]

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[4] T. J. Woofter, "Larger or Smaller Families for America?" *Family, Marriage, and Parenthood*, eds. Howard Becker and Reuben Hill (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1948), chap. 25, p. 746.

[5] Federal Security Agency, National Office of Vital Statistics, *Vital Statistics in the United States*, 1949 (Washington), Part I, pp. XXXI and XXXII.

If this behavior were to continue, it might indicate that the small-family norm of one or two children is changing to a norm of two or three children. Indeed, many young married couples are having three children in the same time their parents had one or two. Most population authorities, however, do not believe that any such fundamental change in family norm is under way. Instead, they attribute the abnormally high birth rates of the immediate postwar years to a combination of factors, including the lowering of the age at marriage, the birth of children earlier in married life, and the acceptance of the employment of the wife after marriage. In short, says one such authority, "this is not to imply that a revival of the large family pattern is imminent." [7]

There have been considerable differences in the performance of the biological function among different regions, occupational groups, and between rural and urban families. In recent years, some of these disparities have diminished. In the decade of the 1940's, as indicated in chapter 15, the "high-fertility" states had a smaller percentage increase in population than the "medium" or low-fertility" states. The urban areas, furthermore, had a higher percentage increase than the rural areas. In spite of these changes, the number of dependent children in rural families and in "high-fertility" regions is still considerably greater than in urban families and "low-fertility" regions.

The biological function also appears to be less adequately performed among such occupational groups as professional and technical workers, and proprietors, managers and officials, than among farmers, service workers, and laborers. Within occupational groups, there seems to be little difference by income level in the average number of children per family. This is not the case, however, with service workers and laborers. Families in these occupations with incomes under $2,000 had twice as many children as families with incomes over $4,000. Families with low incomes tend to have a greater number of children than wealthier families. Table 14 illustrates the number of children in relation to occupational grouping and variation in income level.

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[6] Federal Security Agency, National Office of Vital Statistics, "Provisional Vital Statistics for September 1952," *Monthly Vital Statistics Report*, November 18, 1952, Vol. 1, No. 9.

[7] Calvin L. Beale, "Some Marriage Trends and Patterns Since 1940." Paper read at Howard University, Washington, D. C., May 3, 1952.

Table 14[8]

AVERAGE NUMBER OF CHILDREN (UNDER 18) PER FAMILY
by Occupation Group and Income

	Average Number of Children by Family Income (1949)		
Major Occupation Group of Employed Father in March, 1950	*Under $,2000*	$2,000 *to* $3,999	$4,000 *or* more
Professional and technical workers, and proprietors, managers, and officials (except farm)	1.2	1.3	1.1
Farmers and farm managers	1.7	1.6	1.8
Clerical, sales, and kindred workers	1.3	1.3	1.0
Craftsmen, foremen, operatives, and kindred workers	1.4	1.6	1.2
Service workers and laborers	1.9	1.4	1.0

A further significant factor in the biological function is the economic cost of having children. In an agricultural economy, large families are an economic asset and many stalwart hands about the farm are to be desired. In an urban, industrial economy, the situation is reversed and each new child is another mouth to feed. A few years ago, it was calculated that the cost of raising one child to the age of eighteen was equal to the *total income* of the family for three years. This means that a family with a yearly income of $2,500 spends some $7,763 in bringing up a child to the age of eighteen. The items included in this accounting were: cost of birth, food, clothing, shelter, education, medical care, transportation and recreation, and sundry other expenses. This figure did not include the cost of public education or the value of the personal services of the mother.[9]

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[8] Bureau of the Census, "American Children: Economic Characteristics of Their Families," *Current Population Reports, Consumer Income*, May 23, 1951, Series P-60, No. 8, Table 4. (Figures are for husband-and-wife families in which the husband was 25 to 64 years of age.)

Culture and the Biological Function

The biological function, like all others, operates within the framework of a particular culture. Each culture has its own norms, which combine to make up the peculiar ethos of the group. We have repeatedly stressed the intimate and reciprocal relationship between the American family and the society within which it operates. The forces in this society make for a small family, the limited operation of the biological function, and a limitation of births. We may bring together briefly the diverse elements that make for this general result and influence a large number of families toward a small number of children.

For perhaps the first time in history, the decision as to whether to have children—and if so how many—has rested with the individual family. The very fact that such a decision is made represents an important departure from a day when children came without any preliminary decision, and the family left such matters to forces more powerful than themselves. A complete enumeration of the new factors would involve a history of American society: the urbanization and industrialization of the family, the resultant change in housing resources, the increasing importance of material success, the insistence upon a high standard of living, the emphasis upon happiness as the criterion of marital success, the stress placed upon competitive acquisition, the decline of the religious conception of the family, and the employment of married women outside the home are among the factors contributing to this situation. All these factors combined with the knowledge of contraception have caused this change in the biological function of the family. Children are weighed against a variety of values that are increasingly important to the individual members of the family. Children often come out a poor second in this competition.

The family which we are pleased to consider as "normal" is actually that which existed a century ago and has been in process of modification ever since. The interest of the individual in this former society turned toward the family rather than toward himself or his own pleasure. The trend from a "family-centered" to an "individual-centered" culture has brought with it the decline of the ideal of the large family and has substituted the ideal of the small family. The days when a large family had considerable economic and social utility produced the corresponding social norm. Now that much of this utility is no longer present, the social norm has slowly begun to change. Once a mark of great respect, the large family has not only lost much of this status but has become the object of considerable group disfavor. The social setting has changed, and its ideological justification has begun to change with it.

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[9] Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, "The Cost of Bringing up a Child," *Statistical Bulletin*, November 1943; also Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, "The Cost of Raising a Child in Higher Income Families," *Statistical Bulletin*, January 1944.

The individualism in American culture—considered in terms of the Protestant heritage, the high mobility, and the insistence upon material success—has likewise changed the biological function of the family toward the reduction of the birth rate. The cultural compulsions that impel the individual and the family to seek economic success at all costs also operate as a deterrent to the exercise of the biological function with its former fertility. In the early days of the nation, individual success was the especial prerogative of the male and was not inconsistent with the procreation of a large family. Urbanization has led to the employment of both married and single women, and the individualism of an acquisitive society has been partially assumed by them. Although formerly willing to remain in the home and maintain large families, women are now increasingly interested in working after marriage, an ambition which is impossible to reconcile with a large family.

The affectional function of the family has become more important in bringing two people together in marriage and keeping them together afterward. Affection stresses romance, companionship, and personal intimacy, instead of the prosaic bonds that formerly maintained family solidarity. These elements of affection are most ecstatic during courtship and early marriage, before there are any children to divert affection from the exclusive preoccupation with husband or wife. The social values expressed in the romantic complex are reconciled with a small family of one, two, or three children at the most. Larger families interrupt this romantic felicity and make it impossible for sheer lack of time and psychic energy. Husband and wife cannot maintain the flush of romantic rapture when there are half a dozen additional demands upon their time and affection. Furthermore, excessive childbearing normally has a disastrous effect upon the figure and general attractiveness of the wife, a consideration that looms very large in the romantic equation.

These cultural compulsives have generated the ideal of the small family. We have considered the differential increases in the birth rate following World War II and have concluded that this norm was temporarily, rather than permanently, modified. The individual does not invent these norms and definitions out of his own personal experience, but acquires them from other persons. The ideal of the small family is "in the air," as it were, just as the ideal of a large family was in the same figurative position a century ago. This force of public opinion, operating through the medium of the cultural patterns and group expectations, is intangible and cannot be readily measured. Its power over behavior in the family, however, cannot be denied.[10]

The Affectional Function

The relative importance of the affectional function of the American family has clearly increased in recent decades. The progressive decline in the importance of the other functions has combined with the increasing premium upon the emotional satisfactions in marriage and family living to bring about this change in emphasis. One consequence of this changed emphasis has been to focus attention upon the services that the family is *uniquely* qualified to perform.[11] We have considered the indispensable role of the family in terms of the biological function. The affectional function is likewise a basic human concern.

In its broadest sense, the affectional function covers a number of relationships that are necessary to men, women, and children if they are to develop and continue to act as well-adjusted human beings in our society. Affection includes sex relationships within marriage as perhaps its most obvious manifestation, but it involves infinitely more than that. Sympathy is an indispensable element. The attitudes making up conjugal affection are also included. The reciprocal affection of husband, wife, and children provides the principal sanctuary for most people in the competitive anonymity of the modern world.

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[10] For an exhaustive study of the various factors affecting fertility, see the series of reports on a study conducted by the Committee on Social and Psychological Factors Affecting Fertility and published in *The Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly*.

[11] Cf. Andrew G. Truxal, "The Present Status of the American Family," *Journal of Home Economics*, September 1932, XXIV, 773-81.

Cf. also Lawrence K. Frank, "Yes, Families Are Changing," reprint from *Survey*, December 1949 (New York: Survey Associates, Inc.).

The need for psychic security grows in direct proportion to the increase in those cultural forces that make for psychic insecurity. A complex technological social system operating in a world of intense nationalism gives rise to the major insecurities of our time, namely, the threat of unemployment, the crisis of total war, and the submergence of the individual in the mass. In the face of these major imponderables, the individual feels inadequate to cope with life. The twentieth century man needs the intimacy of primary-group understanding as much as did his primitive forebear, whose insecurities were based on an entirely different set of life-conditions.

The affectional function is based upon what William I. Thomas has called "the wish for response." [12] Harriet R. Mowrer suggests that response "involves the demonstration of affection, the sharing of interests, aspirations, and ideals, by husband and wife." [13] These attentions may range from sexual intercourse to the many small intimacies between two persons who have lived for years in an atmosphere of conjugal affection. Increasing knowledge of child development has also revealed the importance of affection between parent and young child in terms of the psychic security of the infant. From the complete dependence of infancy to the independence of adult life, the affectional element is omnipresent in one form or another.

The wish for response between husband and wife is frequently confused with the simple desire for sex relations. The elements of response included in the affectional function are more involved and subtle than the mere urge for complete sex intimacy. In its most intense manifestations, sex attraction may exist quite apart from conjugal affection. The most violent affinity may exist between two persons who have not the slightest affection for each other. Many marriages remain unbroken largely because the sex attraction is still strong, although affection has long since departed.[14]

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[12] William I. Thomas, *The Unadjusted Girl* (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1923), p. 17.

[13] Harriet R. Mowrer, *Personality Adjustment and Domestic Discord* (New York: American Book Company, 1935), p. 150.

The affectional function also includes more than romantic love. One reason for the current instability of marriage is the confusion between affection and romance. Couples who come to the parting of the ways for reasons of incompatibility are often disillusioned romantics whose marital experience has failed to measure up to their expectations. Erotic ties, viewed in the narrow sense, are a tenuous foundation upon which to build the superstructure of the family. These ties are inevitably less stable than those forged about making a living, building a home, educating the young, or worshiping God.

Even when the affectional function is considered in its proper perspective as an all-inclusive person-to-person relationship, it still does not have the cohesive force of the more prosaic economic, religious, and other elements.[15] The family of an earlier time reflected the stability of the society in which it operated. This stability became the norm for family behavior in future societies—including our own—since it was the only situation with which anyone was familiar. In a highly dynamic, unstable society such as the present, this general instability is naturally mirrored in family living. A new norm of family behavior seems to be emerging, based upon a higher degree of instability. At the same time, however, the individual will continue to seek within the family the psychic security denied him in the larger society.

The Status Function

The status function refers to the place in society conferred upon the individual by his identification with a particular family. Every society has such devices for locating the individual in relation to other individuals and groups. The family has played the most important part in the determination of status in all previous societies. Throughout most of the history of our society, the role of the family in this respect has been no less important. When a new individual is born, he immediately occupies the place (status) of son (or daughter) of two adults who comprise a family group. He is given a name that identifies him individually as John or Mary, but his primary initial identification rests with his family. This identification continues to be of fundamental importance throughout his life.[16]

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[14] Willard Waller, *The Family, a Dynamic Interpretation*, rev. Reuben Hill (New York: The Dryden Press, 1951), p. 334.

[15] Leonie Ungern-Sternberg, "The Marriage of the Future," *The Book of Marriage*, ed. Count Hermann Keyserling (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1926), p. 266.

The status thus conferred may not be an exalted one, for the concept does not apply only to the leading families of a community. Each family has a status, whether it be that of the local handyman or the leading professional man. Students who have spent their early years in a small town will remember when they were referred to as "the little Smith boy" or "the little Jones girl," an indication that they were judged largely in terms of their identification with a particular family. In many stable communities, the majority of individuals still live out their lives in the same town, the same house, and the same status. Before he is called upon to prove himself as a person, the individual is first of all a member of a family. In Elmtown, says Hollingshead, "The family sets the stage upon which the adolescent is expected, if not compelled by subtle processes and techniques, to play out his roles in the development tasks he faces in the transition from child to adult." [17]

Statuses are of two kinds—*ascribed* and *achieved*. "Ascribed statuses," says Linton, "are those which are assigned to individuals without reference to their innate differences or abilities. They can be predicted and trained for from the moment of birth. The achieved statuses . . . are those requiring special qualities, although they are not necessarily limited to these. They are not assigned to individuals from birth but are left open to be filled through competition and individual effort." [18] In those "sacred" societies, where *resistance* to change is high, ascribed statuses (for example, age, sex, occupation) play a major part in the life of the individual. In those "secular" societies, where *receptiveness* to change prevails, achieved statuses become more important. In the transition from the "sacred" to the "secular" society, the family tends to lose some (but by no means all) of its status function.[19]

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[16] Winch, *The Modern Family*, chap. 4, "The Status-Conferring Function of the Family."

[17] August B. Hollingshead, *Elmtown's Youth* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1949), p. 159.

[18] Ralph Linton, *The Study of Man* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1936), p. 115.

[19] Howard Becker, "Interpreting Family Life in Context," *Family, Marriage, and Parenthood*, eds. Howard Becker and Reuben Hill (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1948), chap. 1.

Nothing places the status function of the family in sharper perspective than the traditional treatment of the child born out of wedlock. At common law, such a child was denied any status in the family or society, as evidenced by the name of *filius nullius* (nobody's son) that was applied to him. In practice, this rigorous attitude was modified, since it was equivalent to saying that illegitimate children were not human (that is, social) beings. A person with no status whatever is unthinkable. These children were, in effect, children of their mother, although they had no legal right to inherit from either parent.[20]

The implementation of the democratic creed in America has led to the improvement of the status of children born out of wedlock. Approximately 130,000 illegitimate children are born annually in the United States. As indicated in chapter 5, these children enjoy a status superior to that of a former day when the common law was more rigorously applied. Furthermore, an estimated 75,000 babies are legally adopted every year, of which an indeterminate, although doubtless large, number are born out of wedlock.[21] The status of these adopted children is for the most part better than those living with unmarried mothers. The latter children still have a dubious social status.

The family confers status upon the child because of the place in the class structure which the individual family occupies. "Position in the class structure," says Winch, "generally determines the particular modes of adjustment in which it (the family) instructs its young; the family's position also tends to determine the type of experience, institutional and otherwise, to which the child will be exposed." [22] The status function of the family is thus intimately related to the class structure of the larger society. The boys and girls with whom the child plays, the schools he attends, the neighborhood influences to which he is exposed, the occupational goals to which he aspires, and his chances of attaining these goals are all related to the position of his family in the class structure. Hence we may explore briefly the class structure of the contemporary United States for a more complete understanding of the status function of the family.

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[20] Cf. Kingsley Davis, "Illegitimacy and the Social Structure," *American Journal of Sociology*, September 1939, XLV, 215-33.

[21] Julia Ann Bishop, "Adoption," *Social Work Year Book 1951* (National Association of Social Workers, 1951).

[22] Winch, *The Modern Family*, p. 96.

We are immediately faced with a paradox. The ideal of American democracy is that of unlimited equality of opportunity for every individual to rise above the status of his family of orientation. At the same time, the realization of this ideal is not possible in many cases because of the inferior status of this self-same family. Families differ widely in the potentialities which they offer their members to improve their status. Vertical mobility is often blocked in the modern factory, for example, by the educational limitations of the workers, as well as by the introduction of many trained employees whose family origins are largely middle- and upper-class.[23]

In the field of education, there is also a striking difference between the ideal and the actuality. Education currently offers the best avenue to vertical mobility, and educational opportunities have been correspondingly democratized. At the same time, class differences (and ultimately status differences among families) continue to limit the access to higher education that is so necessary to advancement in the social hierarchy. Whereas a large proportion of upper-class and upper-middle-class children continue their education to the college and university level, only five per cent of the lower-class children reach that level. The obvious difficulty is in the economic sphere, with the working-class family needing the income from the labor of the boys who have stopped school.

Other and less tangible factors, however, are also operative. Within the school itself, both student-teacher and student-student relationships may produce tensions and frustrations for the child from a working-class home. Teachers are largely middle-class and reflect middle-class values in treating the children of the less favored classes.[24] Students also express the attitudes of their families toward children below them in the social scale.[25]

At the same time, however, the American Dream of vertical mobility has widespread validity. Vertical mobility is still possible in our society, probably to a greater extent than in any other similar society.[26] Data on the extent of vertical mobility are comparatively rare and inconclusive. One such study concludes that "a fraction somewhere between two-thirds and three-quarters of the workers . . . came from the level of the father or from the adjacent levels, perhaps without altering their essential status." [27] Vertical mobility from strictly occupational factors is apparently declining, although it is by no means at an end. It is still possible for the son of an immigrant to become a great surgeon, a justice of the Supreme Court, or a captain of industry. The American Dream is far from dead.

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[23] W. Lloyd Warner and J. O. Low, *The Social System of the Modern Factory* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1947), chap. 9.

[24] W. Lloyd Warner, Robert J. Havighurst, and Martin B. Loeb, *Who Shall Be Educated?* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1944).

[25] Cf. Hollingshead, *Elmtown's Youth*, p. 441.

[26] W. Lloyd Warner, Marchia Meeker, and Kenneth Eells, *Social Class in America* (Chicago: Science Research Associates, Inc., 1949), p. 4.

The limitations placed upon achieved status mean that the family of orientation places a strong stamp upon the individual. Children thus acquire the status of their parents, as the younger generation incorporate into their personalities the definitions and values of the older. Members of the same status level tend to form their friendships among persons of a similar level. They also marry within the same or adjacent levels and thereby perpetuate the status system.[28]

Some men may move up in the status hierarchy by getting better jobs and making more money, whereas many women make the step by marrying someone of a higher status. Once risen to a new position, the individual must gain recognition and acceptance from the other members of the new social segment, for otherwise the newly mobile person will be unable to consolidate his gains. In terms of family status and social class, therefore, the members of any community are ranked, whether they are aware of it or not, in inferior or superior levels. It is possible to rise (or fall) from one level to another, but the influence of the status initially conferred by the family is still very strong.[29]

The concept of family status traditionally implied the subordination of the individual to the family. This relationship was especially applicable to the woman. The wife was not considered as possessing any aim in life beyond the welfare of the family. The growing independence of women implies a continuous revision of this subordination to the monolithic interests of the family. As they continue to become individuals in their own right, women will weaken the patriarchal solidarity of the family, based upon the subordination of the female to the male. This unity was one of the principal bases for the status which the family conferred upon its members. As family structure is modified, the status function will follow.

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[27] Percy E. Davidson and H. Dewey Anderson, *Occupational Mobility in an American Community* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1937), pp. 164-65.

[28] Warner, *et al.*, *Democracy in Jonesville* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1949), pp. 27-28.

[29] *Ibid.*

The Socialization Function

The final function maintained by the family with much of its former significance is that of socializing the individual. This is the process whereby the biological individual becomes a person by taking on the social expectations of his group. As Park and Burgess have pointed out, "The person is an individual who has status. We come into the world as individuals. We acquire status and become persons. Status means position in society." [30] Some of the implications of acquiring status have been discussed. The family relationship involves this process and much more. The influence of the family upon the early life of the individual is incalculable. No man can know or measure accurately the manifold influences upon his personality of his early and formative years spent in the family. During this relationship, he literally becomes a human being.

The transmission of the basic elements of the cultural heritage is a central function of the family. So important is this general function —and the impact upon personality resulting therefrom—that we are devoting an entire section to its discussion. We shall therefore be content with the mere mention of the socializing function in this context. All through the seven ages of man, the family exerts a varied influence upon the individual—whether as son, daughter, mother, father, husband, wife, or any of the other and less strictly defined roles which the family exacts. These roles are defined by society, but they are interpreted through the intimate family group. As the individual acquires these roles during his early experience in the family, his personality gradually takes shape. The family plays a central part in this development.

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PART V

THE FAMILY AND PERSONALITY

18

THE SOCIAL NATURE OF PERSONALITY

When two young people pledge their troth in lifelong monogamy, the occasion is a joyous one. For the student of social behavior, however, this occasion represents the embarkation on a difficult venture in social relationships. Two different personalities, fashioned by disparate social and cultural environments, are entering upon an experiment in intimate, cooperative, lifelong association. For some twenty years, these two persons have been subject to the differing subcultures of two families, plus the influences of other primary and secondary groups. The continuous interaction of two unique biological beings with different social environments has produced two individuals who could not, under any conceivable circumstances, have exactly the same tastes, standards, interests, values, attitudes, and characteristics. In a highly dynamic society, the remarkable fact is not that marriage fails, but rather that it so often succeeds.

The Nature of Personality

In this section, we shall consider some of the elements and relationships within the family group that have contributed to the divergent personalities of the two young people who stand so bravely before the marriage officiant. Personality and its formation constitute a complex and difficult subject and one on which scientific information is often insufficient or contradictory. This fact does not, however, relieve us of the responsibility of attempting to delineate the main features of personality and of examining the role of the family in its formation. We shall therefore consider first the nature of personality itself, with especial reference to its social and cultural composition. We shall next examine the development of personality in the friendly matrix of the family, indicating the impact of this central relationship upon the infant and child, then upon the adolescent, and finally upon the parents themselves.

Personality may be defined as "the totality of those aspects of behavior which give meaning to an individual in society and differentiate him from other members in the community, each of whom embodies countless cultural patterns in a unique configuration." [1] Certain investigators, notably some of the psychiatrists, attempt to limit personality to "the reactive system exhibited by the precultural child, a total configuration of reactive tendencies determined by heredity, and by prenatal and postnatal conditioning up to the point where cultural patterns are constantly modifying the child's behavior." [2]

Such a limitation places too great importance upon biological inheritance and very early conditioning, at the expense of the manifold social and cultural influences of childhood, adolescence, and maturity. Many of the important "aspects of behavior" which "give meaning to an individual in society" are clearly integrated into the developing personality long after cultural patterns first begin to modify the behavior of the child. Personality is a continuous process that is never completely fixed in time.

This social orientation of personality has been given its due amount of recognition by some psychiatrists. Dr. Karen Horney maintains that frequently neuroses can be attributed to an inner conflict in attitudes of "moving toward," "moving against," and "moving away" from people.[3] The relation of personality to the total social environment is likewise at the core of the approach of Dr. James S. Plant. The student of personality, he suggests, discovers that the object of his study leads beyond the limits of the present into the past and that "To understand the personality, it is not enough to be a psychiatrist; one must be historian and sociologist as well." [4]

Dr. Plant recognizes that there are certain inborn characteristics that account for the way in which essentially similar environments stimulate individuals to a variety of reactions. These inborn traits (alertness, complexity, pliability, temperament, and cadence) are, according to Plant, the unchanging aspects of the individual. To these relatively fixed characteristics are added the demands and opportunities of the culture that impinge on the child early in life and lead to the fixation of certain mental attitudes (security, reality, authority). The total "rest of the personality" is made up of all the life experiences that have been built into the relatively permanent features of the individual.[5]

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[1] Edward Sapir, "Personality," *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1934), XII, 85.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 86.

[3] Karen Horney, *Our Inner Conflicts* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1945), p. 18.

[4] James S. Plant, *Personality and the Cultural Pattern* (New York: The Commonwealth Fund, 1937), p. 23.

While recognizing that personality represents a continuous process, the psychiatrist Franz Alexander contends "that cultural constellations can reinforce and bring into the foreground certain emotional mechanisms but cannot introduce any fundamental dynamic principles into human nature." [6] The child's ego must adjust to continuous and rapid biological changes during the first years of life. These changes in maturation may, according to Alexander, be affected by external (that is, social and cultural) conditions, but for the most part the biological changes are essentially similar for all human beings. As the child develops into an independent individual, he learns to control both his body and his intelligence in order to adjust more adequately to the changing environment. Cultural factors, concludes Alexander, undoubtedly influence the readiness of the child to accept the maturation process. The important consideration, however, is the biological process of maturation, not the factors that merely influence but do not essentially change this process.[7]

A slightly different approach to personality is offered by Murray and Kluckhohn. "Personality," they suggest, "is the continuity of functional forces and forms manifested through sequences of organized regnant processes in the brain from birth to death." [8] One of these functions is the reduction of tension, by which latter term they mean need or drive. Tension compels uneasiness or disequilibrium (hunger, pain, fear) which in turn pushes the individual toward a goal that will restore his equilibrium and hence reduce the tension. The goal is not a completely tensionless state, however, but rather the process of reducing the tension. The degree of satisfaction of the organism is therefore roughly proportional to the amount of tension reduced per unit of time. Other essential functional forces, according to Murray and Kluckhohn, involve the designation of programs to attain distant goals, the reduction of conflicts between needs, and the mitigation of disparities between personal desires and social sanctions.[9]

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[5] *Ibid.*, chap. 4.

[6] Franz Alexander, "Educative Influence of Personality Factors in the Environment," *Personality in Nature, Society, and Culture*, eds. Clyde Kluckhohn and Henry A. Murray (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949), ch. 23, p. 332.

[7] *Ibid.*, pp. 332-33.

[8] Murray and Kluckhohn, "Outline of a Conception of Personality," *ibid.*, chap. 1, p. 32.

These approaches to personality all have in common the conception that personality is a process beginning at birth and ending with the grave. They differ in the relative emphasis placed on the inherent mechanisms and the social and cultural factors. The old discussion of heredity versus environment has ceased to have any meaning. Man becomes a human being through the adaptation of his biological organism to social and cultural conditions, and it is impossible to say where one set of factors ends and the other begins.

These components of personality are so irretrievably and so inextricably intertwined that any analysis merely reveals the "universe of discourse" in which the analyst happens to live and work. The authors happen to be sociologists. Consequently, it is understandable if they tend to regard personality and its social-cultural environment as two aspects of the same thing. This position is summed up in the epigrammatic statement of Faris that "Culture is the collective side of personality; personality, the subjective aspect of culture." [10] This occupational bias should not be interpreted, however, as a denial of the basic importance of the biological heritage. In the scientific division of labor, we are merely dealing with the things we know best.

The Determinants of Personality

"Every man," aver Murray and Kluckhohn, "is in certain respects (a) like all other men, (b) like some other men, (c) like no other man." [11] We may explore briefly some of the implications of this pithy statement. In the first place, every man is like *all* other men because there are certain universals in human experience. All men are born as helpless infants, grow to maturity, and eventually decline and die. All men have tensions such as hunger and sex and must find ways to release them. All members of the human species have erect posture, hands that grasp, and a highly elaborate brain and central nervous system. All men, finally, live in some sort of society and possess a culture. Many higher animals may live in a rudimentary social system, but they do not possess a culture. Culture sets the limits within which the behavior of every human being is defined.

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[9] *Ibid.*

[10] Ellsworth Faris, *The Nature of Human Nature* (New York: The McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1937), p. 278.

[11] Kluckhohn and Murray, "Personality Formation: The Determinants," *Personality in Nature, Society, and Culture*, chap. 2, p. 35.

In the second place, every man is like *some* other men. A group of Americans will look and act differently from a group of Chinese. Members of the same national state, social class, or occupational group will have certain traits in common with every other member of the same social unit. By the same token, they will be set off from members of other social units. A society whose livelihood is based upon hunting will differ in many important characteristics from one primarily devoted to fishing or industry, and the members of each society will have corresponding similarities and differences. Persons reared under an authoritarian family system will have certain qualities in common with others who have been similarly reared and will differ from those reared in an equalitarian pattern.[12]

In the third place, every man is like *no other* man. Each personality has certain unique qualities, both in genic inheritance and interpersonal experience. Except in the case of identical twins, no two individuals bring exactly the same genetic constitution into the world. The possible combinations and permutations of genes are infinite, and every individual is genetically unique. Even with identical twins, the different interaction of the maturing individual with his various environments means that each twin will have a unique personality. Nor is the family environment of brothers and sisters similar, as many people assume. Each child has his own place in the family constellation and is subject to a different set of influences from every other child. In terms of both his biological heritage and his social experience, no person is therefore exactly like any other person.

We may examine the elements that in combination comprise the personality. These elements are considered under the headings of: (1) Constitutional Determinants; (2) Group Membership Determinants; (3) Role Determinants; (4) Situational Determinants.[13]

1. *The Constitutional Determinants of Personality.* The idea that

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[12] Bertram H. Schaffner, *Fatherland: a Study of Authoritarianism in the German Family* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1949).

[13] In the following discussion, we have followed closely the analysis of Kluckhohn and Murray, "Personality Formation: The Determinants," *op. cit.*, chap. 2.

all men are created equal was a product of the romantic idealism of the Age of Enlightenment. In the sense of equal genetic equipment, this statement is not taken literally today, if indeed it ever was. The modern conception of universal equality instead takes the form of equality of opportunity, which has reached a height in the United States that was hitherto unknown. Equality of education is particularly pertinent to the cult of democratic equality. But every school teacher knows that the children before her in the classroom did not start life with equal genetic equipment, whatever may have been their family status.[14] Some children will be constitutionally unable to achieve more than a fourth-grade level of intellectual progress, no matter how hard they may try. Others will demonstrate such genetic deficiencies as deafness or epilepsy, whose implications for personality development are great.

Apart from these obvious deficiencies and defects, there are wide ranges of differences among so-called normal individuals that appear to be constitutional in origin. Among the elements that are unequally distributed among individuals are "potentialities for learning, for reaction time, for energy level, for frustration tolerance," as well as "different biological rhythms: of growth, of menstrual cycle, of activity, of depression and exaltation." Finally, personality is also shaped in accordance with such constitutionally determined factors as "stature, pigmentation, strength, conformity of features to the culturally fashionable type. . . ." [15] In these and many other ways, certain characteristics that will affect the future development of the adult personality are fixed, or at least strongly predetermined, at the moment of conception.

2. *Group Membership Determinants.* The biologist makes the most important (although by no means the only) contribution to the understanding of constitutional determinants in personality. The sociologist, the anthropologist, and the other social scientists make their contributions on the level of the group, role, and situational determinants. Personality structure is in considerable measure a reflection of the large and small groups of which the person is a member and of the nature of his participation therein. The culture patterns of a

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[14] The impact upon the adolescent of gradations in family status is indicated in August B. Hollingshead, *Elmtown's Youth* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1949).

[15] Kluckhohn and Murray, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

society are transmitted to the next generation by individuals operating in a specific social setting.[16]

Personality is thus determined by a variety of social and cultural groupings. These range in size from national states possessing the same general traditions at one extreme to the small family group at the other. Personality may reflect participation in: (a) western European culture, (b) the culture of a national state, (c) the ethnic and racial subdivisions within the national state, (d) the class structure of the state, and (e) the version of the larger culture transmitted by the parents to the child.

The role of group membership determinants in personality has been investigated in many different contexts by the sociologist and anthropologist. The individual living on the Gold Coast of Chicago shares in the same general culture as the one living in the slum, but the culture is mediated to each in different ways and through different agents. The United States possesses certain commonly accepted sex mores, but the Kinsey report has shown that membership in different social classes determines to a great extent the undivided conformity to or deviation from the general codes.[17] Even within the same social class, the life experiences of the parents will color the interpretations of the culture which they hand on to the child. Personality may indeed be the subjective aspect of culture. It is important to bear in mind, however, that the process of acculturation takes place in different social settings and through the agency of persons with divergent social heritages.[18]

3. *Role Determinants.* The word personality is derived from the Latin *persona*, which means "mask." The *dramatis personae* were the masks that actors wore in a play to depict various characters. From an etymological point of view, then, personality may be considered literally as the parts played by the individual in relation to others. Park and Burgess, indeed, define personality as "the sum and organization of those traits which determine the role of the individ-

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[16] Robert J. Havighurst, "Social Class and Personality Structure," *Sociology and Social Research*, July-August 1952, XXXVI, 355-63.

[17] Alfred C. Kinsey, *et al.*, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Company, 1948), chaps. 10-11.

[18] Cf. Gregory Bateson, "Cultural Determinants of Personality," *Personality and the Behavior Disorders*, ed. J. McV. Hunt (New York: The Ronald Press, 1944), Vol. II, chap. 23.

ual in the group." [19] Any large group is composed of individuals varying in age, sex, family status, occupation and other characteristics; each individual will have as many roles as he has membership in different groups. Each society defines the roles that its members are expected to play; hence roles are culturally defined social expectations.[20]

In the family the husband plays one role in relation to his wife, another in relation to his children, and still another if he is the son of an aged mother. In his daily work he may be a respected physician, in the evening a grand master of his lodge, and on a Sunday a deacon in his church. By acceptably performing the behavior expected of an individual in each of these positions, his conduct is regarded as representative of his total personality. In many respects the personality is indeed the sum total of all the "masks" an individual may assume, as defined by his culture.

At the same time, however, roles do not portray the whole person. Underneath the "mask" of a loving daughter, there may smolder hatred and resentment against a demanding father who has forced her to give up matrimony. Furthermore, consistency in behavior is not necessarily to be expected as an individual moves from one role to another. A man may be an obsequious servant at the office and thereby acceptably fill the social expectations of his environment. Yet when he is at home the same man may be a tyrant. The manifestations of behavior may vary so greatly among all the roles that an individual plays that it may be difficult to say exactly what kind of person he is. In spite of these qualifications, however, culturally defined roles are important determinants of personality.[21]

4. *Situational Determinants.* In addition to constitutional, social, and cultural determinants of personality, there are certain individual experiences of such a dramatic nature that they set in motion a whole chain of events that uniquely affect the personality. We have no way of knowing the exact nature of these experiences, but it is clear that Saul's vision on the road to Damascus or Augustine's reading in the Garden did bring about profound changes in the personalities of

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[19] Robert E. Park and Ernest W. Burgess, *Introduction to the Science of Sociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1924), p. 70.

[20] Ralph Linton, *The Cultural Background of Personality* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1945), pp. 76-77.

[21] Theodore M. Newcomb, *Social Psychology* (New York: The Dryden Press, 1950), pp. 280-83.

these persons. To this day, sudden religious conversions are puzzling to the psychologists, since they represent a drastic change in neural pathways. A traumatic birth experience may effect basic changes in personality; a subsequent accident or an injury may produce similar results. Whatever answer science may give to such events as we now call "chance," "luck," or "happenstance," these things occur and often have a way of changing the main stream of personality development.

Situational determinants are not necessarily things that happen only once. They may happen many times so long as they are not standard for the group. For example, in April, 1951, there were approximately 40,000,000 families in the United States. Of this number more than 2,600,000 were parent-child groups, that is, made up of a parent and one or more children under eighteen years of age.[22] The majority of dependent children at any one time are found in a "normal" family situation, for example, with husband, wife, and children living together in a home. In these parent-child families where the head is widowed, divorced, separated, or the spouse absent for other reasons, the situation is not "normal." This is a situational determinant that will inevitably affect the personalities of the children. Any social worker, juvenile court judge, or school administrator can testify that such situational determinants have a bearing on personality formation.

The Complexity of Personality

The final word has not yet been written on the constituent elements of personality and the precise manner in which these are integrated into a functioning whole. It does not appear that the proximate future will see such a word. Knowledge of these elements is continually accumulating from the researches of the biologist, the biochemist, the psychologist, the psychiatrist, and the neurologist, together with those of the sociologist and ethnologist. The synthesis will have to await still further knowledge. If and when that time comes, the philosopher and the religionist will also have their contributions to make to the understanding of the complex whole of personality.

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[22] Bureau of the Census, "Marital Status and Household Characteristics: April 1951," *Current Population Reports: Population Characteristics*, April 29, 1952, Series P: 20, No. 38, Table 11, p. 6.

We may speak of personality *in* culture, rather than personality *and* culture. Personality and the socio-cultural environment are, in a sense, two aspects of the same thing, and it is scientifically unsound to set one off from the other. At the same time, we must recognize that culture limits the *forms* of behavior, whereas the basic *potentialities* are provided by the characteristics of the biological species, *homo sapiens*. Individuals are born male and female and this simple fact speaks volumes concerning the possibilities for functioning of the sexes. At the same time, the *forms* of behavior socially expected of these differing biological groupings (for example, the roles) vary widely among different social systems. The student of personality ignores the universal biological dichotomy of male and female, however, at his own peril.[23]

The biologist and the geneticist obviously have much to contribute to the understanding of personality. The genetic constitution of the individual is determined at the time of union of the ovum and the sperm cell. This is, however, by no means the sole key to the adult personality. The increasing knowledge of the chemistry of the human body in the form of the secretions of the endocrine glands has revealed an entirely new universe of information relative to personality functioning. The maintenance of the delicate functional balance of the various parts of the organism (homeostasis) is the result of the secretions of the ductless or endocrine glands.

These secretions (hormones) are deposited directly into the blood stream from the parathyroid, the thyroid, the pancreatic islands of Langerhans, the adrenal cortex, the posterior pituitary, the adrenal medulla, the gonads, and the anterior pituitary. The latter is frequently referred to as the "master gland" because of its role in producing various secretions necessary for maintaining the operation of the thyroid, adrenal, and sex glands.[24] Spectacular effects have been achieved from hormone therapy in correcting various bodily disequilibria and in remedying personality defects. Some specialists attribute *all* of the basic elements of personality to the activity of the endocrine glands alone. Such a position is as incomplete as to attribute *all* of the elements of personality to social and cultural factors.

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[23] Margaret Mead, *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies* (New York: William Morrow & Company, 1935). Cf. also Margaret Mead, *Male and Female* (New York: William Morrow & Company, 1949).

[24] Edward W. Dempsey, "Homeostasis," *Handbook of Experimental Psychology*, ed. S. S. Stevens (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1951), chap. 6, p. 211.

Equally significant discoveries in psychoanalysis, psychiatry and neurology have led others to think of personality primarily in terms of neural and psychological mechanism, either functioning "normally" or "abnormally." Terms like the *unconscious*, *preconscious*, and *conscious;* the *id*, *ego*, and *superego;* and *compensation*, *identification*, and *regression* have had wide scientific and popular currency as complete interpretations of personality, both adjusted and maladjusted. In the field of neurology, startling results have been achieved in altering the emotional behavior patterns of psychotic ("insane") patients who have undergone operations to the prefrontal lobes of the brain (prefrontal lobotomy). In many cases, these operations have drastically changed the "personality" of the patient, producing such novel symptoms as "euphoria, accentuated flow of speech and ideas, restlessness, and lack of social inhibitions." [25]

As research in these and other fields continues, more light will be thrown upon the part of each set of factors in the functioning whole we call personality. In the present discussion, as noted, the emphasis is placed upon the *social* aspects of personality, with the clear understanding that this represents only a partial picture. At the same time, however, the psychologist must understand the role of cultural norms and expectations in setting the framework for personality before he can isolate the "authentic" individual.[26] Similarly, the biologist must understand the place of social and cultural factors before he can be sure of that played by purely inherited factors. The complete understanding of personality awaits a master synthesis.

The inherited mechanisms of the human animal at birth can best be described as potentialities. These potentialities may or may not be realized, depending upon the social environment in which the individual is reared. A striking confirmation of this general fact is provided by the literature on the so-called feral man, the individual who has lacked normal social contacts from birth or shortly thereafter. Many of these cases have been demonstrated as fantastic, imaginative, or at best pseudoscientific. Professor Gesell has, however, vouched for the essential authenticity of one of the recent accounts, which deals with two female babies in India who were removed at a very early age from all human contacts.[27] One of the two died soon after her recovery, following a period of approximately eight years when both had apparently been deprived of all human contacts. The other was removed to an orphanage in India, where she lived for the next nine years. During this latter period, she made slow, albeit painful, progress toward becoming a human being.

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[25] Donald B. Lindsley, "Emotion," *op. cit.*, 495.

[26] Linton, *The Cultural Background of Personality*, p. 26.

Here was a confirmation, derived from a highly abnormal situation, of many of the conclusions that Gesell had reached concerning the relationship of the social to the inherited factors in the normal child. In the feral child, the adjustment of the eyes to night vision, the unusual development of the olfactory sense, the failure to develop upright posture and the consequent lack of use of the hands, the complete absence of language, the hostile reactions to human beings—these were some of the consequences of development apart from human contacts. The very slow refashioning of the girl into a human being appeared to demonstrate anew that the plasticity of the organism is greatest in the early years of life. Furthermore, her gradual evolution into something like a normal person after patient and sympathetic care showed that she lacked none of the genetic qualifications for becoming a human being. In the absence of a normal social environment, these genetic potentialities had remained at best subhuman.

Another indication that the human being at birth is a bundle of biological potentialities is derived from the theory of maturation. At birth the child has certain completed patterns of behavior such as crying, coughing, swallowing, and sucking. It also has countless other potential patterns that apparently must await postnatal development for the full establishment of the essential physiological connections. Numerous studies of postnatal changes in animals have demonstrated that a *maturing* of structure is the essential precursor to adequate functioning. In the human child, patterns such as focusing the eyes, grasping, talking, and walking appear in a developed form only after birth and then only after the completion of the appropriate neural connections. Physiological maturation cannot be sharply separated from learning, for the two processes normally occur together. When the organism is prepared to function in a given manner, the social environment is present to stimulate the socially approved manner of expressing the function. Practice and learning go hand in hand with the maturation process.[28]

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[27] Arnold L. Gesell, *Wolf Child and Human Child* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1941).

Plasticity, Growth, and Personality

Personality is a process that begins at birth and ends at the grave, but the process is not continuously even. Changes in personality occur throughout the life span, but these are dependent on the relative plasticity of the human organism. Plasticity is greatest during the earliest years of life. This fact confirms the folk wisdom that the first three to five years of life are the most important in determining personality development. The physiological growth of the individual is not uniform. There are periods of relatively rapid growth, followed by years of relatively slow growth. Studies have plotted the growth curves on the average, and the individual deviations therefrom, for such characteristics as height, weight, basal metabolic rate, mental growth, and others.[29]

The various organs appear to have their own laws of development, those in the upper part of the body developing prior to those in the lower part. The average baby will grow in height about eight inches the first year, four inches the second year, and three inches annually thereafter until he is six, at which time his height is approximately double that of birth. Similarly, his weight will be treble the birth weight at the end of the first year, and by the end of the sixth year it will be approximately five times the weight at birth.[30]

Even more critical than plasticity is the growth of the central nervous system. The biological basis for man's superiority over all other animals lies in the enhanced complexity of his brain. The development of the upright posture and the prehensile thumb contributed to man's unique role as the tool-making animal. But the extent to which these and similar characteristics have been employed, the coordination involved in their use, and the ability to transmit the resultant techniques to others depend upon the qualities of the central nervous system. Similarly, the ability to speak is the result of a complicated coordination of lips, tongue, throat, muscles, larynx, and lungs. Such coordination is achieved on the subhuman level in the form of sounds, calls, and songs. Human speech, however, is vastly different from these phenomena. Language is an extremely complex symbolic form of communication, which could arise only as a consequence of the development of the cortical centers.

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[28] Myrtle B. McGraw, "Maturation of Behavior," in *Manual of Child Psychology*, ed. Leonard Carmichael (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1946), chap. 7, pp. 363-64.

[29] Nathan W. Shock, "Growth Curves," *Handbook of Experimental Psychology*, ed. Stevens, chap. 10.

[30] Elizabeth B. Hurlock, *Child Development*, 2nd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1950), pp. 138 ff.

The superiority of the human brain and nervous system over that of any other animal constitutes man's biological uniqueness and transcendence. Here is the basis for the distinctly social and cultural characteristics of the human species and hence for the development of personality. The ability to utilize past experience for the solution of present problems and the power to project both past and present into the future are the ultimate keys to man's social life and cultural accumulations. Without this biological foundation, the superstructure of social conditioning and cultural assimilation could not be erected, and human personality would be impossible.

The human being has his full complement of nerve cells in the prenatal stage.[31] This does not imply that growth is ended. Further growth does not, however, result from multiplication or subdivision of the nerve cells as is true of other body cells. Growth results from the coming to maturity of cells that were immature at birth and from their extensive proliferation or branching together with an infinite number of interconnections. When the human is compared with the higher mammals, the differences are not in terms of the *number* of nerve cells but rather in the complexity of the associational structure of the human brain cells. The convolutions of the human brain make a great part of the difference.[32]

In terms of weight, the brain at birth is larger in proportion to the rest of the body than at any future time. On the average, it constitutes at birth about one-fourth of the weight of an adult brain. At the end of the second year, the brain will be three-fourths of its adult weight, and at the end of the fourth year it will be four-fifths as heavy as it will ever become. Even though the brain does not reach its mature size until about the sixteenth year, its rate of physical growth is thus very slow after the fifth year. The development of intercerebral association tracts, however, is not correlated with growth in weight.[33]

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[31] Arnold Gesell and Frances L. Ilg, *Infant and Child in the Culture of Today* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1943), p. 18.

Cf. also Davenport Hooker, "The Development of Behavior in the Human Fetus," *Readings in Child Psychology*, ed. Wayne Dennis (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1951), pp. 1-14.

[32] McGraw, "Maturation of Behavior," pp. 353 ff.

The key to the understanding of personality, therefore, does not lie in the size or weight of the brain or in the number of nerve cells. It is true that the curve of cerebral functioning experiences a rapid rise soon after birth and continues its ascent until the decade of the twenties. On the other hand, it is also true that men in their fifties and sixties can continue to gain new knowledge, make new judgments on the basis of their experiences, and gain in general appreciation and understanding through the years.[34] Old dogs can, in short, learn new tricks. They may not learn as quickly, and the learning may be of different order, but they still learn. Personality is a continuous process.

Personality and the Prolongation of Infancy

Approximately seventy years ago, John Fiske wrote a brilliant essay in which he propounded the thesis that the secret of the evolutionary development which eventuated in man is to be found in the lengthening of the period of human infancy. In the sequence from lower to higher forms of life, the stage of immaturity gradually lengthens until in man it is of greatest duration.[35] The divine and theological interpretation which Fiske placed upon his observation may today be outmoded, but the basic core of his idea remains sound. Indeed, a greatly increased store of knowledge has merely elaborated on it. The period of helplessness decreases as one descends the scale from the higher to the lower forms of animal life. The rabbit crawls when one day old and by the tenth or twelfth day is hopping about. The dog likewise crawls at one day and by the fifth week is running. The baby chimpanzee can stand erect by the twenty-seventh week, two weeks after his ability to climb and four weeks after his capacity to run.[36]

A baby chimpanzee was taken into the home of a scientist at the age of seven and one-half months and observed for nine months in comparison with the man's ten-months-old son. The animal revealed ability to learn which was quite favorable when compared with the child. Indeed, the chimpanzee developed abilities in advance of the child in such matters as creeping, age at first walking, opening of doors, learning to eat with a spoon, drinking from a glass, and superior understanding of and responsiveness to human commands. In the crucial matter of vocal communication, however, the child was clearly superior.[37]

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[33] Hurlock, *Child Development*, 2nd ed. p. 150.

[34] Carl V. Weller, "Biologic Aspects of the Aging Process," *Living through the Older Years*, ed. Clark Tibbitts (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1949), chap. II, p. 34.

[35] John Fiske, *The Meaning of Infancy* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1883), p. 11.

[36] Ruth M. Cruikshank, "Animal Infancy," *Manual of Child Psychology*, ed. Leonard Carmichael, chap. 3, pp. 172-73.

The human infant alone requires the most constant and solicitous care for many years after birth. The prolonged period of human helplessness is the time when the child acquires the fundamentals of personality and undergoes the most intensive acculturation. The principal initial agency of these processes is the family. The animal offspring must learn the basic rudiments of subsistence and survival, for which it is amply prepared by its hereditary mechanism.

The human offspring must acquire not only the bases for physical survival but also the mechanisms for social living. He is endowed with a biological inheritance which, compared to the rigidity of the animal organization, is infinitely modifiable. The child is born into a cultural environment that is the end product of millennia of cultural growth, and it is therefore important that the biological base be sufficiently plastic to admit of successful adaptation to the social milieu. For the animal, the problem is one of survival with a minimum of social adaptation. For the human, survival is a *function* of social and cultural adjustment.

The prolongation of human infancy and the associated plasticity of the organism does not mean that the mind of the newborn infant is a *tabula rasa*, on which the environment neatly prints its impression. The infant is not clay in the hands of a potter who, Watson-like, can turn the finished vessel into "doctor, lawyer, artist, merchant-chief and yes, even beggarman and thief." [38] The original excesses of behaviorism have been corrected by increased knowledge and understanding. A modern child psychologist puts it this way: "The preeminence of human infancy lies in the scope, the depth, and the duration of plasticity. . . . This increased modifiability is extremely sensitive to social milieu."[39]

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[37] W. N. and L. A. Kellogg, *The Ape and the Child* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1933).

[38] John B. Watson, *Behaviorism* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1924), p. 82.

However distinctive the human personality may be in terms of its cultural conditioning, it must never be forgotten that man is an animal. Gesell puts this most succinctly when he says: "The individual comes into his racial (and ancestral) inheritance through the processes of *maturation*. He comes into his social inheritance through processes of *acculturation*. These two processes operate and interact in close conjunction."[40]

For many centuries the Western world was agitated by the question of the true nature of the child at birth. During most of this period, the field was left to the theologians, who asserted that the child at birth was totally depraved, the heir of Adam's first sin, and hence in need of salvation. From this pessimistic view of human nature, many of the eighteenth century philosophers went to the other extreme. They maintained that human nature is essentially good when unspoiled by the artificialities and restraints of social existence. If the biological equipment of the human infant were only allowed free and untrammeled expression, they said, the end result would be the maximum of individual happiness and social welfare.[41]

Recent knowledge in biology, psychology, anthropology, and allied fields has led to substantial modification in these versions of original nature. It is now clearly perceived that the individual at birth is neither "good" nor "bad," neither social nor antisocial. He is an amoral, asocial being. The long period of human helplessness is a primary condition for this complex process of becoming a social and moral human being.

Personality and the Social Self

Central to the conception of personality is the idea that its very core—the individual's conception of himself—is a product of his group contacts. Without these contacts, he would presumably never develop a social self and would remain permanently in a sub-human state. Charles Horton Cooley was a pioneer in the socio-psychological analysis of the self. "Social consciousness . . . ," he suggests, "is inseparable from self-consciousness, because we can hardly think of ourselves excepting with reference to a social group of some sort, or of the group except with reference to ourselves . . . . Self and society," he continues, "are twin-born, we know one as immediately as we know the other, and the notion of a separate and independent ego is an illusion." [42]

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[39] Gesell, "The Ontogenesis of Infant Behavior," *Manual of Child Psychology*, ed. Leonard Carmichael, chap. 6, p. 297.

[40] *Ibid.*, p. 316.

[41] See the excellent analysis, written from the point of view of a contemporary theologian, in Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, 2 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941–43).

In the developmental history of the child, the use of the personal pronoun comes late in the process of acquiring a vocabulary. The words "I," "we," and "you" appear long after the child has learned the word symbols corresponding to other objects in the environment. The ability to think in terms of one's self seemingly requires a more extended period of socialization than the ability to identify ordinary objects and the relationships between them. The "I-consciousness" appears about age two, in conjunction with the growing awareness of the child's relationships to other people and their attitudes toward him. Cooley does not deny that each individual is in many respects unique, with a world of his own and a stream of consciousness into which no one can completely penetrate. He concludes, however, that despite this uniqueness each individual is a member of the whole, not only in scientific investigation but in his own eyes as well.[43] As the poet John Donne put it, "No man is an island. . . ."

In the developing consciousness of the child, the environment of persons and objects comes to be defined in terms of their behavior toward himself. The family is the most powerful (and almost the only) segment of this social environment during the early years and hence has an inordinate influence upon the child's consciousness of self. The child responds to the actions of his immediate family in terms of their actions toward him. By their attitudes, expressions, and gestures they delineate a pattern of interpersonal stimulus and response. On the basis of their reactions toward him, the child forms a self-picture in terms of the image of himself held by others and manifested in their behavior. He responds to love, hatred, abuse, or neglect in such a way that his conception of himself is colored by these forms of behavior.

To this image of self as reflected in the behavior of others, he gradually ascribes favorable or unfavorable attitudes to these individuals, based in turn upon their image of him. The notion of the self arises when the child passes judgment on himself, based upon the behavior of others toward him. He first sees an imaginary picture of himself in the behavior of others; he then attributes to others a judgment founded on that image; in response to this judgment, he compares himself to the mirrored image; and finally he pictures his self as he becomes aware of it through this social stimulation and response.[44]

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[42] Charles Horton Cooley, *Social Organization* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909), p. 5.

[43] *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

This is the famous conception of the looking-glass self advanced by Cooley. In his own words, the reflected or looking-glass self "seems to have three principal elements: the imagination of our appearance to the other person; the imagination of his judgment of that appearance; and some sort of self-feeling, such as pride or mortification. . . . The thing that moves us to pride or shame is not the mere mechanical reflection of ourselves, but an imputed sentiment, the imagined effect of this reflection upon another's mind." [45] Faris has amplified this conception by pointing out that the individual's conception of himself arises in a *social* situation, wherein he takes the role of the other toward himself. This means that the individual mentally puts himself in the place of the other person (or persons) and responds to the images which he imputes to the other.[46] The ability to take the role of the other arises only after considerable socialization, a process that first occurs in the family of orientation.

This process of the socialization of the self is further delineated in the closely reasoned analysis of George Herbert Mead. The self, he maintains, is not the same as the physiological organism and should be separated therefrom for purposes of clarity. The self is a dynamic conception not present at birth but arising in the process of social stimulation between the individual and other persons during his early years. For Mead, the unique characteristic of the human being lies in the fact that the self is an *object to itself*. "Man's behavior is such in his social group that he is able to become an object to himself, a fact which constitutes him a more advanced product of evolutionary development than are the lower animals. Fundamentally it is this social fact—and not his alleged possession of a soul or mind with which he, as an individual, has been mysteriously and supernaturally endowed, and with which the lower animals have not been endowed—that differentiates him from them." [47]

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[44] Cooley, *Human Nature and the Social Order* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1902), pp. 152-53.

[45] *Ibid.*, p. 152.

[46] Faris, *The Nature of Human Nature*, p. 7.

The human being is able, unlike other animals, to stand aside from himself, as it were, and look at himself with the eyes of other persons. When the individual acts toward other persons in a certain way, he is clearly responding to their behavior toward him. He is also responding to his anticipation of the other's behavior, which is derived from putting himself in the other's place. When two small boys confront each other in an argument, each responds to a hostile gesture of the other. He also responds to his conception of the other's reaction and future behavior and in this process of role-taking stimulates himself.

Two potentially hostile dogs, on the other hand, respond directly to a menacing growl but apparently do not take the role of the other and react to the resulting impression. The child first responds to the other members of the family and then to his anticipation of what they will do. This process of role-taking is evident very early in the child's development, as he learns to make cries and gestures that will bring his mother running to his side. These cries are at first involuntary, but the child soon learns that certain ones will bring out a desired response in the mother. He is thus putting himself in his mother's place and acting so as to stimulate her favorably toward himself.

In the development of the self, the individual first takes the role of the members of the group to which he belongs, which is initially the family. He becomes a self not by becoming a *subject* of his own thoughts but rather by becoming their *object*. In Mead's words, "He enters his own experience as a self or individual, not directly or immediately, not by becoming a subject to himself, but only in so far as he first becomes an object to himself just as other individuals are objects to him or in his experience; and he becomes an object to himself only by taking the attitudes of other individuals toward himself within a social environment or context of experience and behavior in which both he and they are involved." [48]

If the self as object to itself arises out of experience, the central importance of some means of communication between the child and the other members of the group can readily be seen. Language is the principal means of this communication, although gestures and other signs are important. For the student of child behavior, language has increasingly become a "form of *behavior* through which the individual adjusts himself to a social environment," rather than an abstract means of expressing ideas.[49] Through the medium of language, the individual learns to take the role of the other toward himself and thus view himself as object. As Mead says: "It is where one does respond to that which he addresses to another and where that response of his own becomes a part of his conduct, where he not only hears himself but responds to himself, talks and replies to himself as truly as the other person replies to him, that we have behavior in which the individuals become objects to themselves." [50] Human beings are presumably the only creatures able to carry on conversations with themselves, taking the role of another and thereby viewing themselves as objects.

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[47] George Herbert Mead, *Mind, Self, and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934), footnote, p. 137.

[48] *Ibid.*, p. 138

The social evolution of the self is further illustrated in the play activity of the child. The child gives names to her dolls and takes a name herself for the role she plays. A doll is often given the name of the girl, whereas the girl takes the role of the mother and acts toward the doll (herself) in the same way she has previously observed her mother acting toward her in "real life." In thus assuming the role of the other (in this case the mother) she objectifies herself in the person of the doll bearing her own name and scolds, corrects, or praises it just as if the situation were real and not imaginary.

The child thus acquires a pattern of stimuli that elicits the response in herself that it has demonstrably elicited in others. In playing, the child calls upon these stimuli, many of which are directed toward himself as the object. In other words, he plays house with himself and plays all the roles; he plays store and offers himself something which he then buys; he gives himself a letter and accepts it; he takes the role of a policeman and arrests himself. In Mead's words, "He has a set of stimuli which call out in himself the sort of responses they call out in others. He takes this group of responses and organizes them into a certain whole. Such is the simplest form of being another to one's self." [51]

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[49] Dorothea McCarthy, "Language Development in Children," *Manual of Child Psychology*, ed. Leonard Carmichael, chap. 10, p. 567.

[50] George Herbert Mead, *Mind, Self, and Society*, p. 139.

[51] *Ibid.*, p. 151.

The Social Self and the Generalized Other

The process of social development does not end here. Taking the role of the other and viewing the self as an object is the first step in the development of self-consciousness. The second step means taking the role of the *generalized other*. This is a more complicated performance than merely playing the role of mother, father, or playmate toward himself and thus partially objectifying himself. The new process means that the individual develops his sense of self by responding to the definitions and expectations of the larger social group and looking at himself as an object in these terms. The simplest example of this process may be found in an organized game. Here the child must mentally play the role of (that is, take the part of) all the others in the game and must in addition be conscious of the rules in terms of which he himself (as well as all the others) is expected to act. When the boy throws the ball to first base, he knows what the runner, the first baseman, and the other members of the team will do. This knowledge of the assumed functions of the others causes him to look upon himself as an object in terms of these general expectations. Instead of being confined to a single "other" person, the "generalized" other is composed of the individual's expectation of the behavior of a number of different persons, all acting in terms of the socially established rules of the game.

The more complicated the game, the more complicated is the pattern of expectations to which the individual must respond and to which he must adjust his conduct. The progress from the simple games of childhood to the more elaborate ones of adolescence and finally to the complex "rules of the game" of adult life represents the development of the social self. As he grows older, the individual is faced by an increasingly complicated set of social rules and expectations to which he must respond in a more or less intelligent fashion. The "generalized other" thus ranges in complexity from a childhood game of tag to the manifold responsibilities of an adult citizen of an industrial democracy in an atomic age.

When the totality of persons making up a given society is thus substituted for the individuals participating in a single organized game, the implications of this position become more fully perceived. The "generalized other" is roughly synonymous with the society within which the individual is developing his personality. He must therefore become accustomed to taking not only the role of the other persons toward himself but must take on also many of their general attitudes toward the common activity.[52] Each member of the group learns certain common responses toward many things in the environment. "Such responses," concludes Mead, "give him what we term his principles, the acknowledged attitudes of all members of the community toward what are the values of that community. He is putting himself in the place of the generalized other, which represents the organized responses of all the members of the group." [53]

The voice of the generalized other is closely related to the conscience. When the individual is deterred by his conscience from performing some act, he is responding to the generalized other. The Freudian concept of the super-ego is also similar to the generalized other, for each represents a pattern of value judgments instilled in the individual during the development of his social self. The person is forever putting himself in the place of (taking the role of) the generalized other and viewing himself in terms of the standards of the group. The extent of this identification varies among individuals, depending upon the manner in which these judgments were initially presented to them. The conscience that "does make cowards of us all" is thus the generalized other which is first mediated to the individual through the family.

The mechanisms of role-taking are by their very nature similar for all individuals, but the product is far from uniform. No two personalities are exactly alike in terms of role-taking ability. Although the norms of a given society have certain general uniformities, they are transmitted by persons whose interpretations vary within broad limits. In addition, there are the differences between personalities on the genic level, growing out of variations in genetic, biological, endocrinological, and psychological factors. The social differences compound the genic differences, so that adult personalities exhibit wide variations. Differences in the substructure of the personality (the genic) will be reflected in the superstructure (the social). The family plays a central part on both of these levels.

We have indicated in this chapter that personality is a process beginning at birth (or even in the prenatal stage) and continuing throughout life. Furthermore, any personality at any given moment is an intricately woven pattern composed of genic and social factors. In the state of present knowledge, to give precise weights to these constituent elements would be nothing more than a pleasant semantic exercise. In the field of personality formation, we are confronted with a variety of hypotheses, few of which have been finally established by research.[54] As sociologists, the present authors tend to emphasize the *social* nature of personality. We may turn next to a discussion of the ways in which the family acts upon the personality of the individual in his various roles.

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[52] *Ibid.*, pp. 162 ff.

[53] *Ibid.*, p. 162.

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19

THE PERSONALITY OF THE CHILD

The transition from a prenatal to a neonatal universe is a tremendous experience. Some scientists maintain that the trauma of birth is the most important single experience in the life history of the person. The individual passes from the safety and security of the intrauterine stage to the world outside the body of the mother. Many years ago, William James coined a classic expression to characterize this situation. "The baby . . ." he said, "feels it all as one great blooming, buzzing, confusion." [1] An eminent child psychologist has since questioned this choice of phrase, although he does not deny the essential formlessness of the infants' world. Gesell suggests rather that the baby initially experiences the visible world in "fugitive and fluctuating blotches against a neutral background." He maintains further that the infant hears sounds "as shreds of wavering distinctness against a neutral background of silence or of continuous undertone." The infant, continues Gesell, doubtless enjoys moving his arms and legs, feels refreshed and repleted after a meal, and is distressed when cold, hungry, or thirsty. In other words, even the child in its first hours and days in the world has some coherence of sensation and experience.[2]

The World of the Infant

Even with these reservations, however, the original insight of James still has much to commend it. The world of the newborn infant is fundamentally amorphous, and only through human experience can form be introduced, personality acquired, and the child begin to take the role of the other. The generalized other comes much later, when the world has taken on infinite complexity as compared to the original sensations. It requires a long process for the individual to become a person.

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[1] William James, *The Principles of Psychology* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1890), I, 488.

[2] Arnold Gesell and Frances L. Ilg, *Infant and Child in the Culture of Today* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1943), p. 22.

The first experience comes through the mouth, the ears, the eyes, and the hands. The sucking reflex is complex but ready to function at birth. Muscular tension appears to be the response to loud sounds. It takes some weeks before the eyes can focus adequately and select certain aspects of the environment on which to fasten. Random movements characterize the actions of arms and legs, whereas the hand is ready, at birth, to grasp reflexly. Time and space are meaningless to the newborn. The simplest of relationships—such as here and there, on, under, behind, before—must be acquired after an infinite number of muscular experiences. Poking and prying, manipulating objects, creeping, and walking come later. To these simple space relationships are added abstract notions of space. The understanding of time and duration are acquired with equal difficulty. Yesterday, today, tomorrow, now, soon, later—these are distinctions that demand a sophistication acquired by the child only in slow stages.

These illustrations suggest the type of adjustment the child must make to the world into which he has willy-nilly been projected. Development—whether motor, mental, or social—tends to follow a pattern which is peculiar to each type. Control of the body, for example, follows a definite sequence from the head to the regions farthest from the head. The baby can thus lift his head before he can lift his chest, can control the muscles of the trunk before those of the limbs, and can manipulate his arms and legs before his feet and hands.[3] Furthermore, development proceeds from general to specific responses. The baby moves his whole body before he can move one part of it; he can see large objects before he can see small ones. The same general sequence is apparent in other respects. In the matter of speech, the baby makes amorphous babbling noises before he can say words. General words precede specific words, and general fear precedes specific fears. As the infant matures, he experiences more specific fears and his behavior adjusts thereto.[4]

It is difficult to chart accurately the initial social reactions of the infant. A rudimentary form of social activity apparently takes place at five months, when the child spontaneously seeks to make contact with other persons by babbling and grasping. By six or seven months, the infant begins to include in his play anyone who happens to be present.[5] When two children of this age are together, however, one may try to seize a toy with no apparent consciousness of the other. At this stage, the child clearly has not yet begun to take the role of the other, much less that of the generalized other, with its careful protection of private property and individual rights.

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[3] Elizabeth B. Hurlock, *Child Development*, 2nd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1950), pp. 41-42.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 43-44.

By the end of the first year, the achievement of any desired end may elicit what seems to be evidence of triumph, thus suggesting that patterns of dominance, aggressiveness, and submission appear early in life. At three, the child spends a considerable portion of his time attempting to establish social contact, although this contact is still largely postulated in terms of his own needs, desires, and interests. The child of three interprets the actions of others in terms of his own motivations, which suggests that he still has not learned completely to take another's role and look upon himself as an object.[6]

Dependency and Personality

The human infant comes into the world unequipped to fend for himself, even on a very low level of survival. His social environment fortunately is so organized as to minister to his needs and expect nothing in return. Because of this state of affairs, Freud called this the period of "infantile omnipotence." The newborn has *de facto* control over his universe, which consists of his mother, father, brothers, and sisters. All he has to do to summon them is to cry. It is assumed that the cry is the inherited mechanism by which the organism serves notice that some physiological tension exists requiring restoration or reduction. When the "universe" reacts by giving the baby the breast or the bottle, by covering him with a blanket, by adjusting his diaper, or by fondling and caressing him, the cry ceases. The assumption is that the original tension has been reduced or temporarily eliminated.[7]

The infant is actually not learning during this period to be *omnipotent*, but rather to be *dependent*. Dependency needs are presumably acquired in the same way as other needs, and the child soon learns to depend upon his mother for various ministrations.[8] These dependency needs are built around not only the physiological needs of the infant, but about his emotional needs as well. Physical contact—whether in the form of being held, caressed, or fondled—seems essential to the emotional wellbeing of the child. The mere presence of the mother in the room gradually becomes a source of tension reduction. Attention and mothering appear to be essential prerequisites to the infant's emotional development, especially during the early months.

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[5] Charlotte Bühler, *From Birth to Maturity* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Company, Ltd., 1935), p. 53.

[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 75-76.

[7] Robert F. Winch, *The Modern Family* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1952), pp. 209-13.

The changing climate of opinion in recent decades concerning infant dependency and personality formation suggests the lack of scientifically validated conclusions in this field. Under the influence of Freud and some of his overenthusiastic followers, parents in the 1920's were warned of the awful consequences of tenderness and affection in their relations with the infant. Even a reasonable amount of love, caressing, and attention would allegedly bring about complexes, fixations, and other horrible and permanent distortions of the personality which would continue throughout life. A popular cliché at the time was to the effect that parents were practically the worst possible people to rear children. John B. Watson, the founder of Behaviorism, was one of the leaders in the denunciation of parental coddling, petting, and mothering as fraught with ineluctable consequences for the adult personality. To treat children as though they were young adults was the epitome of Watson's advice to parents of the 1920's.[9]

During the past decade, Dr. Margaret A. Ribble has become the exponent of a point of view at the opposite end of the spectrum. For her, "the infant who is treated impersonally, however well nourished and clean he may be, is actually thwarted in his mental development and may suffer more cruelly than an adult locked up in solitary confinement." [10] The handling and fondling of the baby, far from being hazardous to his personality development, are as necessary as food and drink to his normal growth progression. Mothering is the surest way to start the infant on the right track in life, and hence it should be maximized and not minimized. From this point of view, mothering is a kind of prolongation of the uterine situation into the first few months of external existence. A sense of security is provided by physical contact with the mother, who holds and carries the baby about. By mothering, Dr. Ribble thus not only refers to such obvious details of physical care as feeding, bathing, and holding the child, but also includes a whole group of tender actions, such as "fondling, caressing, rocking, and singing or speaking to" the baby. These actions, she believes, are very important for his proper psychic development.[11]

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[8] Celia Burns Stendler, "Critical Periods in Socialization and Overdependency," *Child Development*, March 1952, XXIII, 3-12.

[9] John B. Watson, *Psychological Care of Infant and Child* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1928).

[10] Margaret A. Ribble, *The Rights of Infants* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943), p. 3.

Based on her study of 600 babies, Dr. Ribble came to further conclusions. Physiologically, she found (a) that there is an unstable and inadequate distribution of the blood stream in the child until about the third month; and (b) that in the same period an inadequate supply of oxygen makes for precarious breathing. Crying might therefore be a form of panic reaction induced by partial suffocation. Furthermore, the infant at birth is a precerebrate organism requiring some time for the development of the forebrain. With these and other deficiencies, the baby needs a great deal of mothering. Failure to receive such mothering may result in one of two types of reactions: (1) negativism, showing itself in the refusal to suck, loss of appetite, rigidity of the muscles, and other symptoms; (2) a form of depressive and regressive quiescence which in acute form is similar to, or identical with, a chronic disease known as marasmus (wasting away). Under the name of *infantile atrophy*, this disease formerly accounted for a large proportion of infant deaths.[12]

This thesis has not gone unquestioned. The case of Dr. Ribble rests upon the physiological and psychological inadequacies and instabilities with which the child faces the world. Conversely, Pinneau cites the results of various experimental studies and observations of these conditions and concludes that the evidence "points to a direct refutation of the thesis itself." [13] The present authors do not profess to judge the implications of this controversy, beyond suggesting that the truth may well lie between the extremes of Watson on the one hand and Ribble on the other. The human infant is clearly born helpless. His dependency embraces not merely the need for food and physical care, but also the need for emotional security. It follows that normal early development will depend upon *both* adequacy of physical attention and a reasonable amount of love and affection.

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[11] *Ibid.*, p. 9.

[12] Ribble, *The Rights of Infants*, p. 93.

[13] Samuel R. Pinneau, "A Critique on the Articles by Margaret Ribble," *Child Development*, December 1950, XXI, 222.

In recent years, the emotional development of the infant has been surveyed by the sociologist, as well as by the psychologist and psychoanalyst.[14] Some of the claims of the Freudians concerning the exclusive importance of certain infantile experiences have been empirically investigated.[15] Such aspects of early training were studied as weaning, bowel and bladder training, feeding, and disciplinary action for the disobedience of these and other normative practices. The general conclusion of this study was that "the personality adjustment and traits of children who have undergone varying infant-training experiences do not differ significantly from each other." [16]

This conclusion does not necessarily mean, as the author is at pains to indicate, that infancy is unimportant in the development of personality, or even that such practices as toilet-training and feeding-schedules do not have a bearing upon personality adjustment. He merely suggests that the entire adjustment of the personality does not depend upon these and other factors in infantile experience. The experience following infancy is also important.[17]

Developmental Sequences and Personality

Science is organized knowledge whose ultimate objective is prediction and control. As a consequence of a vast amount of research on child development, the parent can now know just how the child will develop—socially, physically, and emotionally—from infancy onward. From his infant and child guide books, the parent can discover what changes, on the average, may be expected in height and weight during the early months and years. From the "book" the parent knows when to expect the weaning process to be completed, when the first tooth will appear, when the child will stand erect and take the first uncertain steps. The informed parent can also follow the progress of control of elimination, the first complete words and sentences spoken, and countless other events in the developing personality of the child.

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[14] Cf. Harold Orlansky, "Infant Care and Personality," *Psychological Bulletin*, January 1949, XLVI, 1-48.

[15] William H. Sewell, "Infant Training and the Personality of the Child," *American Journal of Sociology*, September 1952, LVIII, 150-59.

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 157.

[17] Cf. Erich Fromm, "Psychoanalytic Characterology and Its Application to the Understanding of Culture," *Culture and Personality*, eds. S. S. Sargent and M. W. Smith (New York: The Viking Fund, 1949).

Also R. R. Sears, *Survey of Objective Studies of Psychoanalytic Concepts* (New York: Social Science Research Council, 1943).

We may indicate some of the developmental sequences in growth and social relationships which are closely connected with personality formation.[18] (1) *Increasing manipulative skill:* includes such things as the ability to feed and dress oneself and to combine blocks or other objects into building operations. The eye-hand-arm-mouth-swallowing coordination involved in self-feeding is an exceedingly complicated skill that requires a long time to master successfully.[19] (2) *Locomotor or large-muscle skills:* involved in learning to walk and in running, jumping, and climbing. (3) *Language:* of such preeminent importance in socialization and acculturation that we shall consider it in detail below.

(4) *Fantasy:* involves the ability to create an imaginary world peopled with fairies, elfs, Santa Clauses, as well as actual persons and objects growing out of life experiences. In play-fantasy the child becomes an object to himself by taking the role of the other. (5) *Concepts of space, time, object-relationships, and human relationships:* the observations of Piaget on the developing concepts of causality reveal the increasing understanding by the child of the world in which he lives.[20] "There comes a time," says Gesell, "when the child asks many questions—*where, what, why, who,* and *how* questions—and, incidentally, he asks them in this genetic order."[21] The child thus asks first "*Who* made me?" and only later "*How* are babies born?" (6) *Complex sequences:* the stage in which the child participates in complex social relationships and the baby learns to take the role of the generalized other. The manner in which the child comes to un-

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[18] The following is adapted from Lois Barclay Murphy, "Childhood Experience in Relation to Personality Development," *Personality and the Behavior Disorders*, ed. J. McV. Hunt (New York: The Ronald Press, 1944), chap. 21.

[19] Arnold L. Gesell, *The First Five Years of Life* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1940), p. 242.

[20] Cf. Jean Piaget, *The Child's Conception of Physical Causality* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1930).

[21] Gesell and Ilg, *Infant and Child in the Culture of Today*, p. 26.

derstand such a thing as money, its value and meaning, is an example of this process.[22]

Concomitant with these developmental sequences in growth occurs a change in social experiences. The child's first love object is the mother or mother-substitute, and he soon becomes dependent upon her. Just as dependence has to be learned, so does independence. In child training for socialization, dependence must gradually decrease in favor of the slower progress of independence. Patterns of parental authority are at first absolute, but they are gradually modified and shifted. By adolescence, the peer-group exercises more authority in certain respects than do the parents.[23] The ordinal position of the child in the family and his sibling relationships are important social situations influencing personality formation. The behavior in such relationships may run the gamut from companionship and affection to jealousy, rivalry, and competition.

The general picture of child development emerges from this brief analysis of growth sequences. These uniformities in progression do not, however, produce absolute uniformities in the personality. Each personality owes its uniqueness to the fact that neither the constitutional heritage nor the social environment of any two persons is exactly the same. However constant may be the general growth curve, therefore, the finished personality ultimately reflects the interaction of a unique organism with a unique configuration of social and cultural forces. The final understanding of behavior in a given situation lies in the total gestalt (that is, setting) in which the behavior occurs. To understand the personality of the child, one must see him in his total situation.

Personality development is thus in one sense uniform. In another sense, it is unique with each individual, depending upon the constellation of forces within which it occurs. The dependency needs of the child will be gratified in one way if he is born to a mother who has long and ardently desired a child. They will be met in another way if he is born to a mother who unconsciously rebels against motherhood. These needs will be met in still another way if the child is born to an unmarried mother who deposits him in a foster home at the earliest possible opportunity. When the child reaches the stage of muscular development when it is normal for him to run, jump, or climb, it will likewise be a matter of considerable importance in his personality development whether he lives in a city apartment, in the suburbs, or on a farm.

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[22] Anselm L. Strauss, "The Development and Transformation of Monetary Meanings in the Child," *American Sociological Review*, June 1952, XVII, 275-86.

[23] For a discussion of the role of the peer group, see James H. S. Bossard, *The Sociology of Child Development* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1948), chap. 21, "The Role of the Peer Group."

Variations in individual patterns of growth may also combine with constitutional tendencies to determine the manner in which a new situation will affect the child. Children differ in their sensitivity to pain, noise, and other sensory stimuli. They also differ in their reactions to authority. One child may be extremely upset by a disciplinary action to which another will respond in an indifferent manner. These differential reactions appear to reflect temperamental differences and not merely prior reactions to authority.[24]

In a sense, children "select" the elements of their environment to which they react, and in this way they determine the nature of a given experience. Selectivity of this kind may arise either from previous life-experience, from constitutional differences, or both. It is difficult to determine the extent to which constitutional differences are involved. In any event, it has been demonstrated that one child will be aggressive when frustrated, another when gripped by fear, and a third for no apparent reason other than to bolster his ego.

Family Authority and Personality

The stage of infantile omnipotence does not last long. Around the helpless infant, the entire social environment is continually mobilized to anticipate his desires and meet his needs. His early omnipotence will never be repeated nor will his power be continued. There comes a time when the social world says "No." Without knowing the why or the wherefore, the child bumps into the universe. He becomes painfully aware that his urges, desires, whims, and fancies cannot be immediately gratified by an indulgent society. Here is the beginning of the process of building into the structure of his personality the inhibitions, the repressions, and the redirections of energies essential for living in society. Here is also the beginning of maturity.

When this stage is reached, it would be revealing to have dictaphonic reports of parental reactions to the child's behavior. Such records would be the kind of evidence, which no abstract discussion can possibly equal, of the way in which the elders transmit the ways of the group. In the world of the child, his wants, urges, and drives are imperious and complete. In the world of the adult, satisfactory social adjustments are possible only when the individual's wants are restrained, checked, and balanced by the wishes of others. Ethical and moral standards have their genesis in group life. Out of social experience, trial and error, and folkways evolving into mores, normative principles have emerged. Ordered social life would be impossible without accepted standards regulating the relations of man to man.

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[24] Murphy, "Childhood Experiences in Relation to Personality Development," *op. cit.*, p. 662.

An adult can understand why the expression of the biological urges must be controlled if there is to be an ordered society. A parent of a two-year-old child would have difficulty in explaining that the reason for restraint lies in a concept of societal welfare. Lacking such a rational contact with the self-centered infant, the parent unconsciously utilizes authority as the only basis for transmitting the right ways of the group. However reluctant the kind father might be to admit it, out of the long experience of the group he has become the designated authoritarian for inculcating group ways in the young. The age-old injunction of honoring the father and mother is only one of the ways in which the group has designated the parents as its proper representatives. Very early in the life of the new individual there are presented to him patterns of authority and submission, of superordination and subordination. If the process of socialization is to be successful, these patterns must be followed.

During recent decades there has been much discussion concerning the relative merits of the permissive as opposed to the restrictive approach to the care and rearing of children. Thirty years ago, pediatricians were advocating restrictive practices; for example, regular, fixed schedules for feeding, and the beginning of toilet-training after the first month. More recently the pendulum has swung to the opposite extreme. Parents are now told that infants need "mothering," and hence they should feed the infant on demand or when he is hungry. Furthermore they should not be too rigid or too early with toilet-training, and in other ways should adopt a developmental or permissive attitude.

These shifts in opinion have prompted one student to summarize the trends in child care as follows:

> Whether it be the influence of Freudianism and psychoanalysis; the educational theories of Dewey; the "stimulated interest" concept of Froebel; Montessori's idea of "spontaneity in education"; the sweep of "behaviorism" in the twenties and thirties; or in the emphasis on "mothering" in the late forties; it is painfully clear that the writers in the field of infant care and child-rearing disciplines have been slow to construct a body of data that withstands empirical scrutiny. Instead, they have often reflected changing patterns of thought in middle-class society and reflected changing theories of education and personality formation.[25]

This is perhaps too harsh a criticism. Granted that the science of child care is far from definitive, a body of empirical data is nevertheless being constructed that will eventually lead to more positive results. The crux of the problem is not the necessity of inhibitions and repressions, but rather their *right timing* so that wholesome personality development may ensue. As noted, Gesell indicates that there is a developmental sequence in the physiological growth of the child and that training must follow such a sequence. Parents may wish for the child to walk at two months, but he is not going to, no matter what efforts are put forth to train him.

The same principle of the proper timing of social restraints may be applicable to all phases of child training, including the social and the emotional. Small children appear to derive a pleasurable reaction from self-stimulation of the erogenous zones of the body. This generalized pleasure sensation is a part of the so-called libido, although it is not to be confused with the sex pattern of the mature individual. The reaction of parents to this behavior is often one of disapproval. Narcissism of any kind is admittedly a handicap in later life, but this does not mean that extreme forms of repression at this early stage are necessarily wholesome. To punish the innocent child by various extreme forms of condemnation does not remove the urge, but merely drives it underground, later to find expression in substitute forms.[26]

A small child shows no sense of shame at exposing its body to the gaze of others. In the world of adults, such exposure constitutes a crime. It is difficult to say at what point in the child's development this difference in attitude must be instilled. Bad timing in such teaching has often led to prudery and neurosis. The three-year-old daydreamer [27] can live in a world in which he is Prince Charming, and the environment will approve of his creation. If he carries this fantasy into adult life, he will inevitably become a candidate for a mental hospital. The problem is therefore not one of permissive as opposed to restrictive child rearing; it is rather one of restriction applied at *the right time* to produce the best results in personality formation.

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[25] Clark E. Vincent, "Trends in Infant Care Ideas," *Child Development*, September 1951, XXII, 205.

[26] For a discussion of sex education in the family, cf. George E. Gardner, "A Factor in the Sex Education of Children," *Mental Hygiene*, January 1944, XXVIII, 55-63.

In the years before he is five or six, the child may be said to respond to two major drives: (1) the desire for satisfaction of his organic needs; and (2) the desire for self-direction and freedom of action to do what he wants to do. The opposition and negativism of the young child to parental interference with these drives is a common part of the family experience. By the age of five or six, however, the child is well on his way to socialization. By that time, he has begun to seek the approval of his parents and increasingly accepts their demands in order to please them. This desire for the approval of the other persons in his widening environment (first his parents, then his siblings, then his playmates, and finally his teachers) is an increasingly important element in his behavior. The maturing child wishes to avoid punishment and at the same time to win the approval of those who can reward him for his behavior.[28]

Language and Social Adjustment

The infant comes into the world lacking equipment for any form of communication except crying. Crying is his way of expressing disequilibrium, but crying is nonsymbolic behavior in that it has no social content. Symbolic behavior has been defined as "all those actions of a human being which are effective and significant only because they have a socially designated meaning. . . ." [29] Whereas the infant's cry is nonsymbolic, the mother responds with behavior that is symbolic. In the universe of the mother, all behavior of the child has social meaning. Consequently, the mother acts toward the baby as if he were endeavoring to communicate in precisely the same way she is—that is, by symbols.

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[27] Esther Walcott, "Daydreamers: a Study of Their Adjustment in Adolescence," *Smith College Studies in Social Work*, June 1932, II, 283-335.

[28] Allison Davis and Robert J. Havighurst, *Father of the Man* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1947), pp. 36 ff.

[29] Richard T. LaPiere and Paul R. Farnsworth, *Social Psychology* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1936), p. 77.

As a result of this interaction, the child comes to associate his own actions with the responses of the mother and thus learns to express his wants through socially significant meanings. The fond mother is on sound scientific ground when she avers that after the first month she is able to distinguish whether the cry arises from hunger, pain, discomfort, or other reasons. These cries actually do differ in "intensity, tonal quality, and rhythm," after the first month and are no longer a monotone. Cries of pain are "shrill, loud, and interrupted by whimpering and groaning, or short, sharp, and piercing." From the second month the "cry of discomfort is low and whimpering, while that of hunger is loud and interrupted by sucking movements." [30]

As a result of interaction with a social milieu, the undifferentiated cries of the baby become differentiated, and the cry becomes an elemental form of communication. If bodily distress can be thus communicated, it is to be expected that bodily euphoria can be similarly communicated. The identification of the facial expression of a two-months-old baby as a smile, however, may represent reading an adult point of view into the child's response. Smiling as social behavior comes later than crying and is doubtless a learned response arising from both the non-symbolic and symbolic actions of the parents in relation to the child. The tickling of the infant and the playfulness of the parents, accompanied by smiling, doubtless elicit similar responses by the child. When the child does smile, the answer of his environment is so ecstatic that smiling soon becomes a valued element in his growing repertoire of socially determined behavior.

Smiling thus becomes a symbolic gesture, and the child learns to use other gestures to express himself and communicate with others. Squirming and wiggling to indicate opposition to restriction, holding out the arms to be picked up, reaching for objects, turning the head away to indicate the satisfaction of hunger—these are illustrative of the childish uses of bodily activity as means of communication. Many of these activities are accompanied by meaningless vocalizations, which may be the beginning of true words and language. The child appears to learn with alacrity the gestures of those in the environment about him, together with the tone of voice associated with various gestures, long before the words have any meaning for him.[31]

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[30] Hurlock, *Child Development*, 2nd ed., pp. 210-11.

Another important foundation for the later acquisition of speech is the so-called babbling stage. By movements of the head, arms, and legs, the child is learning control over his body in general. At the same time, he is constantly experimenting with his vocal mechanisms. At the early age of four months, the infant appears to have learned to coordinate these mechanisms adequately. At this age, infants "blow bubbles, coo, chuckle, gurgle, laugh, constantly experimenting with the use of tongue, larynx, and breath control. . . . The foundation sounds for the native language are mastered by eight months and by nine months the speech rhythms of the language begin to be apparent." [32]

Enthusiastic parents to the contrary notwithstanding, however, these earliest sounds are not true speech. There are four major aspects to the process of learning to speak. The child must master all four, since they are interrelated and success in one cannot be gained without success in all the others. He must (a) comprehend the speech of others; (b) acquire a vocabulary of his own; (c) combine the words of his vocabulary into sentences; and (d) pronounce these and other additions to his vocabulary.[33] The individuals in the environment of the infant accompany their behavior toward him with appropriate words (symbols). Hence the child comes to comprehend words and their significance long before he himself makes use of them.

By the age of one year, the child will be using several words, such as dada and mama. By eighteen months this number will be ten to twenty-two, after which development is very rapid. Between ages two and six, the vocabulary will increase by 500 to 600 words annually.[34] It is not too great a leap from the "babbling" sound to the completed word. It is not strictly accurate, however, to say that the first symbols used by the child designate objects, persons, or things in his environment. Rather, the lack of other words means that his single word must do duty for both noun and verb. Furthermore, since the child is egocentric it is reasonable to conclude that the naming of an object by a noun does not imply any objectivity on the part of the speaker but rather some felt need, wish, or desire in relation to the named object. The first words are nouns, followed by verbs, especially those having to do with action. Adjectives and adverbs then appear, with prepositions and pronouns acquired later.[35]

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[31] Dorothea McCarthy, "Language Development in Children," *Manual of Child Psychology*, ed. Leonard Carmichael (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1946), chap. 10, pp. 480 ff.

[32] Marian E. Breckenridge and E. Lee Vincent, *Child Development*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Company, 1949), p. 395.

[33] Hurlock, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

[34] Breckenridge and Vincent, *op. cit.*, p. 396.

Language is the *sine qua non* of the socialization and acculturation of the human being. Language is the social depository of man's cultural heritage, and is therefore the means by which the individual adjusts to the social milieu. Without language, personality cannot develop normally. The impetus to language acquisition is usually given first by the mother and next by other members of the family. The central role of the family—and particularly the mother—in the development of the child's use of language is thus apparent. Hence the expression "mother tongue" takes on a literal as well as a symbolic meaning. The plasticity of the child is reflected in the fact that he learns incorrect pronunciation as readily as correct forms. He also changes his methods of pronunciation, even his native tongue, if moved early to another social, family, or national environment.

The Family and the Social Situation

The newborn child is not merely exposed to the culture of his society, but rather to that version of the culture mediated to him by his family. Mother, father, brothers, and sisters constitute the complete world for the child when he is meeting society for the first time. The smaller the unit of the family, the more circumscribed is the arena for the family drama and the greater will be the influence upon the child of the persons composing it. The impact of the adult members upon the young will be of a different character in an extended family as compared with our nuclear structure.[36] In either case, however, the family is the principal agent in *defining the situation* for the child. As W. I. Thomas puts this general relationship, "The child is always born into a group of people among whom all the general types of situation which may arise have already been defined and corresponding rules of conduct developed, and where he has not the slightest chance of making his definitions and following his wishes without interference." [37]

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[35] McCarthy, *op. cit.*, pp. 503 ff.

[36] Margaret Mead, *Coming of Age in Samoa* (New York: William Morrow & Company, 1928).

These family definitions take a variety of forms and range from the simplest activities to the most profound moral precepts. Even before the child is capable of independent locomotion, his conduct is defined by the words and gestures of his parents. He is told to be quiet when he cries, to eat when he may or not be hungry, and to adjust his elimination to the toilet-training of his elders. In our culture, for example, in their zeal to promote the cultural imperative of cleanliness, parents may attempt to toilet-train the young at too early an age. Early and excessive concern over establishing such patterns may, in individual instances, be at the basis of later emotional or behavioral disorders. This is not to blame the parents, however, for defining the situation in the only way they know. They are merely expressing our cultural emphasis on the importance of cleanliness.

The family also defines the situation on more complex ideological levels. The earliest conceptions of religion, morality, government, marriage, and the family arise through this process of familial definition, and the personality of the growing child becomes an intricate mosaic of these cultural definitions. The preference for the monogamous family, the acceptance of the democratic form of government, the belief in the Christian religion, and the respect for private property become an integral part of his personality, built upon a series of definitions which take place so gradually that the child is hardly aware of the process. The family is therefore in a sense a "conservative" influence upon the child, since it is inevitably weighted on the side of the *status quo*. The parents are themselves the products of personality formation that began in their own childhood relationships with their parents. Hence it is only natural that they should regard the definitions woven into their personalities as the right and proper ones.

The early fashioning of the child's attitudes is another function of the family environment. Attitudes are defined in behavioristic terms as "a form of anticipatory behavior, a beginning of action which is not necessarily completed. . . . They bespeak one's actual trends to overt conduct." [38] If attitudes are "habitual reaction tendencies," then values are the "objects toward which we direct our desires and attitudes." [39] Observations of young children reveal that a bright object, such as a toy, constitutes a stimulus to which the child reacts directly by reaching for it. The fact that the toy may be held by another child appears to make little difference, since the latter does not yet enter into the reaction-pattern. The parent enters the picture to make the child aware of the other and to introduce such ideas as sharing, finding a suitable substitute, or some other device emphasizing the *social* nature of the situation.

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[37] William I. Thomas, *The Unadjusted Girl* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1923), p. 42.

[38] Kimball Young, *Social Psychology* (New York· F. S. Crofts & Company, 1944), p. 121.

In her observations of nursery school children aged two to five, Katherine M. B. Bridges discovered that the child at first seems interested only in itself. As it becomes aware of other children, little friendly actions emerge, such as helping another child out of the snow, unbuttoning its coat, and similar acts. Likewise, at a cry of distress from a child, the other children at first only stare or cry in imitation. Later this self-centered attitude gives way to such actions as putting an arm about the distressed one, or asking in gentle tones if it hurts.[40]

The youngest children do not give evidence of social cooperation and genuine sympathy, but those who are somewhat older do show such social traits. This can be explained in one of two ways: either there is a postnatal maturation of an inherent biological drive toward sympathy and cooperation, or else the child's environment directs him to social attitudes in this direction. Even if it be granted that maturation may be related to this and other problems, it still remains true that the parents and others encourage the expression of attitudes essential to socialization.

The receptivity and sensitivity of the child to his milieu are sufficient to explain how he acquires the foundations of racial, religious, or class prejudices. It is highly doubtful, for example, if there is any biological foundation for racial antipathy. Too many societies are free from these prejudices to account for them on such a basis. The more likely explanation is that prejudice is socially produced and socially transmitted. Refusing to allow their children to play with children of another race, making disparaging remarks about people of an

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[39] *Ibid.*, p. 123.

[40] Katherine M. B. Bridges, *The Social and Emotional Development of the Pre-School Child* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., 1931), pp. 48-49.

"inferior" race, and behaving toward such people in an unnatural or stilted manner are some of the ways in which parents unwittingly foster these attitudes.[41]

Other forms of prejudice have an even more dubious physiological basis. A Jewish student reports that of all the memories of his childhood none is more vivid than hearing Gentile parents reprimanding their children for playing with him. The same situational factors give the child his basic attitudes toward the members of other social classes. In ways which parents think are subtle but which are probably transparent to the child, Johnny's attentions are diverted from playing with the truckdriver's daughter next door to the banker's little girl who lives a mile away. Slighting comments about the cleanliness, clothing, manners, and language of the former are caught up by the sensitive child mind, as are joking comments about "marrying" into the family of the latter.

Subcultural Aspects of Personality

The adults who constitute the environment of the child do not consciously transmit their attitudes and values to him. They are merely behaving in terms of the major culture and subcultures of which they themselves are a product. The primary emphasis in this book is on the middle-class American family. We may compare the attitudes and behavior patterns of this segment of the population with the patterns of the other social classes.

Perhaps the most significant single finding of the Kinsey study, for example, was the sharp difference in sex behavior between social classes, using educational attainment as the principal criterion of class. Whereas almost 100 per cent of the males with a grade school education reported premarital sexual intercourse, only about two-thirds of those with a college education had such experience. Masturbatory practices were more common among the upper than the lower-class groups, whereas the former had a higher degree of stimulation by erotic imagery than the latter.[42]

These subcultural differences are not surprising in view of the experience of the two classes. For the upper-level males, the continuance of education and the consequent postponement of marriage means that sex relations are on what Waller has called an "aim-inhibited" basis. This means that adolescent boys and girls in the upper levels spend much time in each other's company, have dates, and engage in a variety of heterosexual relationships known generically as "petting" or "necking." At the same time, however, these young people consider themselves too young to marry, and consequently they attempt to avoid both marriage and complete physical intimacy. In these two senses, their relationships are "aim-inhibited." The sexual patterns of the upper level thus differ widely from those of the lower level, whose members have no such inhibitions.[43]

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[41] For a discussion of the mechanisms of this process, cf. Allison Davis, "American Status Systems and the Socialization of the Child," *American Sociological Review*, June 1941, VI, 345-54.

[42] Alfred C. Kinsey, *et al.*, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Company, 1948), pp. 331 ff.

This emphasis upon premarital chastity has characterized middle-class American society from the very beginning. It has usually been accompanied by a conspiracy of silence with regard to parental education of children in sex matters. Until very recently, the attitudes of middle-class parents were marked by secrecy where sex was concerned. Either children were assumed to be blissfully innocent in such matters, or sex was something to be concealed as nasty and brutish. The lower classes may be just as deficient in the sex education of their children, but the life circumstances of these groups are frequently such as to give the children a more casual attitude with respect to sex. Children reared in crowded housing accommodations will be exposed to the sex behavior of their parents in a different manner than those brought up in homes where complete privacy is possible.

Another middle-class traditional virtue that has been deeply ingrained in American society is success. The striving for success became such a powerful social urge in this country because it was associated with conditions favorable thereto. Just as postponement of complete heterosexual experience was necessary because of the preparation for a career, so the denial of other present gratifications for the sake of future goals became a social desideratum. Thrift, frugality, and self-denial were accepted attitudes for all parents to pass along to their children for the sake of future success.[44]

A large number of lower-class families unquestionably have these middle-class ideals, even though they are unable to realize them. For many such families, however, the incentives to rise in the social scale are not so strong, and resultant attitudes of resignation are transmitted to the children. When the family is constantly threatened by unemployment, the concept of thrift in order to acquire a business of one's own loses much of its force. Furthermore, the family must establish "need" in order to qualify for relief, a situation that further weakens the incentive to save. Installment buying also characterizes the behavior of many lower-class families, whereby they gain at least temporary possession of such luxuries as television sets, electric dish washers, and automobiles. In many other respects, the lower-class family tends to ignore thrift for the sake of future goals and adopts instead an attitude of living for today and letting tomorrow take care of itself.[45]

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[43] Willard Waller, *The Family*, rev. Reuben Hill (New York: The Dryden Press, 1951), p. 148.

[44] The product of these ideals was the "inner-directed" personality type suggested by Riesman. Cf. David Riesman, *The Lonely Crowd* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950).

The subcultures of the different classes also vary in their attitudes toward aggression. The middle and upper classes maintain some of the codes that have come down from chivalry, in which the boy is not supposed to start a fight, pick on a smaller boy, or physically abuse a girl. At the same time, the upper-level child is told that he must defend himself when someone else is the aggressor. If he does not rise to this occasion, he is considered a coward, and both his own ego and the egos of his parents presumably suffer accordingly.

Furthermore, aggression in other forms is expected of the upper-level child, even though he may not overtly exhibit this trait. In the sublimated form of competition, aggression is enthusiastically encouraged by the parents. Many of the physical impulses toward aggression are taken out in competitive athletics, in which the culturally-induced incentive to win is strong. Finally, the child is expected to compete for grades in school, although undue success in this respect is often considered slightly unworthy of a thoroughly masculine boy.[46]

In the lower classes, physical aggression is encouraged and competition in the classroom is discouraged, especially for boys. The latter are expected to be aggressive in order to defend themselves in the predatory social jungle of the slum. Parents in the lower classes are

[45] For a discussion of the lower-class family in these and other respects, see Allison Davis, "Child Rearing in the Class Structure of American Society," *The Family in a Democratic Society* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1949), pp. 56-69.

[46] Winch, *The Modern Family*, p. 238.

also more accustomed to use methods of corporal punishment upon their children than are middle- and upper-class parents. Hence the lower-class children come to accept the principle of violence in their relations with others. Personal aggression is therefore at a premium in many lower-class environments, whereas the same behavior is looked upon as reprehensible in a middle-class neighborhood. In each case, the family expresses the dominant attitudes and values of the subculture and transmits them to the child.[47]

Family Roles and Personality

In the "psychodrama" of family life,[48] each member learns to play a series of roles. We may consider some of the roles played by parents and children, with particular reference to the impact of these roles upon the expanding personality. In earliest infancy, dependency conditions the nature of the initial role. Each successive stage of development means that one series of roles is first modified, then discarded, and finally a new series assumed. When the individual fails to adopt his role to his changing years, he becomes socially retarded and unable to emancipate himself from childhood. He retains, in short, many of the emotional characteristics of the baby, a role which he played to perfection and which he is unable, for one reason or another, to abandon.

A role is a pattern of behavior established to meet the expectations of other persons. When the child plays his particular role, he is thereby responding to the expectations of the members of his family. Each role is merely a part the child plays, first in the drama of family life and later in the larger drama of the adult world. The early role is important because the child has no choice and must live up to the expectations his parents place upon him. The role he learns to play in these plastic years determines much of his later emotional experience.

Freud perceived the extreme importance of these first roles, and erected an entire psychological theory about them. It is not necessary to place such exclusive emphasis upon the emotional ties associated with these roles to appreciate their central importance in the development of personality.[49] The responses called out in the child and the members of the family by these early roles do much to condition the personality. We may note some of these representative roles in childhood that may warp and distort the adult personality.

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[47] Breckenridge and Vincent, *Child Development*, 2nd ed. p. 225.

[48] Bruno Solby, "The Psychodramatic Approach to Marriage Problems," *American Sociological Review*, August 1941, VI, 523-30.

1. *The Only Child.* The only child early becomes the center of family attention and retains that status. Other things being equal, this situation may be fraught with greater possibilities for mis-direction than is the case in families containing more than one child. The role of the only child may involve so great an association with adults that he develops an intellectual maturity beyond his years. This precocity may be gratifying to parents until they realize that the child is not developing similar social aptitudes with his own friends. In these and other ways, the role of the only child may involve social handicaps as well as intellectual rewards.[50]

2. *The Sickly Child.* Another type of role taken early in family life is that of the sickly child. The child who has a history of chronic illness may soon learn how to dominate his social environment. The universal sympathy for distress is a kind of cultural imperative, and illness, whether real or feigned, often calls forth such sentiments. The child of three who has learned to utilize illness to get his own way may become the man of forty who is still using his "heart trouble" to impose his will on his family.

3. *The Overprotected Child.* A variety of factors may lay the groundwork for overprotective attitudes on the part of parents, especially the mother. A serious illness is one. Other factors productive of this same result are: a long period of anticipation and frustration in the desire for a child; sexual incompatibility with the husband; isolation from the husband because of lack of common interests; emotional impoverishment in early life; and thwarted ambitions of the mother. This smothering kind of affection may retard the development of the child and give him a role characterized by excessive demands or by stormy, spoiled behavior.[51]

4. *The Rejected Child.* The cultural norms of our society dictate that the child shall be wanted and shall be treated with love and

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[49] Cf. William H. Sewell, "Infant Training and the Personality of the Child," *op. cit.*

[50] Anne Ward, "The Only Child," *Smith College Studies in Social Work*, September 1930, I, 41-65.

[51] Cf. E. A. Strecker, *Their Mother's Sons* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1946).

affectionate care. A rejecting mother is "one whose behavior toward her child is such that she consciously or unconsciously has a desire to be free from the child and considers it a burden." [52] This maternal rejection may manifest itself either in oversolicitation because of feelings of guilt or by outright dislike and neglect of the child. In any case, it is not surprising if a child in such a role develops an atypical personality.

The foregoing illustrate the wide variety of possible roles of the child. Other family environments lead to other types of roles. Some children may be the object of all the ambitions of a mother or father, frustrated in the outside world or disappointed in the family experience. Others may become the center of a complicated parental conflict, in which the affection of the child is a pawn in the struggle. Others may become neurotic because of too much or too little love. Still others may be unable to face the threatened withdrawal of parental love and may unconsciously suffer personal frustration.[53] Some unhappy ones may experience the difficulties and uncertainties of minority group status and early assume a role of permanent subordination.[54] Whatever ultimate form the personality takes, early familial roles have an important influence. The child is indeed father of the man.[55]

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[53] Cf. Arnold W. Green, "The Middle-Class Male Child and Neurosis," *American Sociological Review*, February 1946, XI, 31-41.

[54] Cf. Genevieve Teague Stradford, "Behavior Problems of Bright and Dull Negro Children," *Smith College Studies in Social Work*, September 1944, XV, 51-65.

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THE PERSONALITY OF THE ADOLESCENT

Adolescence is a critical period in the life history of the individual. All societies take cognizance of this transition from childhood to adulthood, however variant the forms of recognition. In many primitive societies this is the time when the young are put through an elaborate system of initiation ceremonies designed to test their ability to assume the full rights and responsibilities of adult status. The nature of the tests depends on the configuration of values regarded as most desirable. They may comprise tests of physical endurance, the ability to withstand pain without wincing, or the deprivation of food and drink in order to induce hallucinations. In the latter state of mind, the individual is presumably receptive to suggestions and instruction in the ways of the group. This period may also be marked by segregation of the sexes, the boys living in male quarters and the girls in the women's house. In some cultures, the maturing sex drive is granted relatively free expression in spontaneous sex play, whereas in others such relationships can be carried on only in a clandestine manner.[1]

The Nature of Adolescence

In primitive societies, there is comparatively little need for formal education. At an early age, the child learns by informal contacts and associations the habits of animals, the best means to success in the hunt, the flora and fauna of the region, the ability to build and navigate a canoe, and similar attributes essential for survival. The folklore, traditions, mores, and norms of the group are orally transmitted to the young by the elders, together with the ceremonies and rituals that symbolize the group adjustments to the physical, social, and supernatural environments. Where education consists largely of these unorganized and informal practices, puberty ceremonies are regarded very seriously. The change in status from childhood to adulthood is considered sufficiently important to warrant its social recognition. Puberty ceremonies are the devices employed by society to signalize that the individual is now competent to become a responsible adult.

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[1] Cf. William I. Thomas, *Primitive Behavior* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1937), chap. 12.

Contemporary society does not dramatize this transition by elaborate ritual and ceremonies.[2] Nevertheless, the parent does not need to be told that adolescence is a critical stage in the development of his children. Religious and educational institutions realize the importance of this period and direct many of their ministrations thereto. The fact that adolescence is a period of crisis does not, however, deny its continuity with the past and future life of the individual. At any stage, as Murray points out, personality contains elements that are variable and those that are relatively stable.[3] Adolescence represents both the intensification of the previous system of habit patterns and the emergence of certain basic changes in the structure of the personality.

Personality development is not an even progression by weeks and months, but instead occurs in a series of jumps or spurts, interspersed with periods of relatively little change. The spurt in the early adolescent period is comparable in importance with the earliest period of infancy and childhood. No series of generalizations characterizing the early adolescent years will fit into each experience. The family milieu, the other social relationships, and the individual's own nervous and temperamental make-up determine the nature of his experiences. This variation may extend throughout the entire continuum, from the person who passes through the period with relatively little turmoil to the one whose teen experiences are in reality a time of "*Sturm und Drang.*" As in the case of other characteristics, most persons are somewhere about the mid-point. Certain aspects of the adolescent "jump" affect them seriously; other phases leave them relatively untouched.

Adolescence is also marked by an exaggerated concern for the role of the individual in the peer group. This is a manifestation of the social self, whereby the individual's conception of himself is based upon the judgments he imputes to others. The adolescent is often plagued by feelings of inadequacy and the fear of losing favor with the peer group.[4] As we have noted above, this is the time of romantic love, when the adolescent deeply needs the assurance of being loved by a member of the opposite sex.[5]

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[2] Cf. James H. S. Bossard and Eleanor Boll, "Rite of Passage—a Contemporary Study," *Social Forces*, March 1948, XXVI, 247-55.

[3] Henry A. Murray, as quoted in Allison Davis and Robert J. Havighurst, *Father of the Man* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1947), p. 118.

The adolescent is also unduly sensitive about his physical appearance. As we shall see, there is considerable variation among individuals in rate of growth. One boy of fifteen may have attained adult height, with his voice completely changed and his muscles well developed. Another boy of the same age may be late in developing and may possess none of these desirable qualities. The latter will clearly be at a disadvantage with his age group, whose attitudes of approval are so necessary to the felicitous development of the social self. Fears of social disapproval may similarly plague the girl who is abnormally tall, or the one who is too fat to satisfy the cultural norm set by the movies. The girl who is last in her group to develop feminine curves or begin menstruation may be under the same psychological strain as the slowly maturing boy.

Physiological Changes in Adolescence

The full period of adolescence in our society extends all the way from ages 12-14 to ages 22-24, when complete maturity is achieved. For purposes of this discussion, the major interest is in the earliest years and hence may strictly be called early adolescence. The achievement of complete heterosexuality and the search for a mate in the courtship period is the stage of late adolescence. When parents speak of the problems of their adolescent children, they are using the term in the sense here employed, namely, the ages 13-17.

Roughly speaking, the line of demarcation that sets off adolescence from childhood is, in the girl, the beginning of menstruation, or the menarche. In the boy, it is the appearance of the first pigmented pubic hair.[6] To be sure, the girl experiences the beginning of rapid growth in height and weight, the enlargement of the breasts, and the pelvic breadth prior to the onset of menstruation. Chemical analysis of the urine and X-rays of bone development may prove more accurate measures of the onset of puberty than menstruation. For our purposes, however, any sharp differentiation between prepubescence, pubescence, and postpubescence is scarcely necessary.[7] On the average, menarche occurs between ages 13 and 14. If the appearance of the first pigmented pubic hair in the boy is a phenomenon comparable to menarche, it might be said that boys mature at approximately the same time as girls. Because girls attain adult standards of height and weight earlier than boys, however, it is popularly accepted that boys mature about a year later than girls in our society.[8]

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[4] Marynia F. Farnham, *The Adolescent* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1951), pp. 46-47.

[5] Cf. Geoffrey Gorer, *The American People* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1948), chap. 4, "Love and Friendship."

[6] Wayne Dennis, "The Adolescent," *Manual of Child Psychology*, ed. Leonard Carmichael (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1946), chap. 12, pp. 637 ff.

Early adolescence is a time of rapid growth and change in all bodily characteristics—bones, muscles, brain structure, and internal organs, including the glands. In general, this growth spurt occurs from age 10 to about age 14, which latter age marks the attainment of sexual maturity and the secondary sex characteristics. After this, there is a marked slowing down of the curve of growth.[9] While proportionately not as great as the prenatal rate of growth, the prepubertal years nevertheless show a phenomenal increase in height, weight, and other bodily changes. The fond parent who measures Johnny's height with a pencil mark on the door jamb never ceases to marvel at the rate the inches are added. He does not always realize that the legs must increase 5 times to reach adult proportions, whereas the trunk will only treble in size. The "hollow leg" into which the adolescent seems to be pouring the tremendous quantities of food is thus more than a symbolic expression. Muscles are also developing rapidly. At age 16 the body's weight is 44 per cent muscle, compared with 32 per cent at age 15 and only 27 per cent at age 8.[10]

The actual size of the head does not change appreciably after the sixth year, although there is a marked change in the proportions of the face from childhood to adulthood. In adolescence, the low forehead of childhood becomes higher and wider; the snub nose gives way to a longer and wider nose. The flat lips of the child become fuller and the mouth widens. The jaw is last in attaining adult size.

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[7] Elizabeth B. Hurlock, *Adolescent Development* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1949), pp. 28-31.

[8] Dennis, "The Adolescent," *op. cit.*, pp. 641 ff.

[9] Hurlock, *Adolescent Development*, chart, p. 68.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 82.

In this process the face becomes longer and oval-shaped.[11] In the brain, there is a speeding up of the maturation of additional nerve cells and the elaboration of the intercommunicating network.[12] This maturation serves as the necessary neuro-physiological basis for the increased activities and interests observable at this time.

The acceleration in growth and the relatively sudden changes in bodily proportions give rise to the familiar awkward characteristics of the adolescent. At the same time, there is an increase in coordination as represented in strength and manual dexterity. The "awkwardness" of the adolescent may actually be a function of two variables. It may be occasioned, on the one hand, by the physiological changes that are occurring at a very rapid pace. It may also be associated with the variety of new social situations which the adolescent has to face. His experience up to this time has not prepared him for many of these situations.[13]

Prior to and associated with the menarche in the girl is the changing character of the pelvic bones, which gives rise to the widening of the hips. The development of the breasts comes next, followed by the appearance of pubic hair. After the beginning of menarche, hair under the arms (axillary hair) begins to develop and also a slight down on the upper lip. In the case of the boy, the growth in height and weight is associated with the enlarging of the genitals, followed by the maturation of the testes and allied glands. The discharge of seminal fluid (nocturnal emission) is the external symptom of such sexual maturation. The growth of pubic hair and the beginnings of facial hair also appear at this time. Changes in the length of the vocal chords and the larynx bring about a lowering of the voice. While this is occurring, the voice has a tendency to "crack," producing squealing sounds, interspersed with loud noises. With the girl, the changes in the voice are not so striking, although the vocal quality becomes richer and more pleasing.

Based on extensive animal experimentation, the presumption is that these changes in sex characteristics are stimulated by the hormonal secretions of the endocrine glands. Apparently the master gland, the anterior lobe of the pituitary, initiates the process by increasing secretions of the gonadotropic hormones. The latter, acting through the blood stream, speed up the secretions of hormones by the gonads (ovaries and testes). The hormones produced by the gonads presumably influence the development of the secondary sex manifestations. The hormones are also related to the production of sperm and ovum and affect the uterus. Another fraction of the anterior pituitary gland is the growth hormone, which has been isolated.[14] This hormone is especially active during the phenomenal growth sequences of the prepubescent period. With the full functioning of the hormones secreted by the gonads, the latter retard the functioning of the growth hormone.[15]

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[11] Luella Cole, *Psychology of Adolescence*, rev. ed. (New York: Rinehart & Company, Inc., 1942), pp. 36-39.

[12] Lawrence A. Averill, *Adolescence* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1936), p. 63.

[13] Paul H. Landis, *Adolescence and Youth* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1945), p. 42.

It is easy to understand why a girl who has not been warned concerning menstruation and its meaning should be greatly disturbed by the sudden appearance of bleeding. The lack of comprehension of the process may be so intensified by other physiological and emotional tensions that the experience becomes traumatic. In general, the normal girl does not suffer an appreciable amount of pain at the menstrual period. But the heightened suggestibility of the adolescent, added to defective education by the parent, can lead even the normal girl to associate illness and disability with menstruation and to carry this pattern through life. Associated with these physical and emotional states may be ideas of uncleanness or revulsion against sex. There is also the lack of participation in the usual activities of the group, for which no explanations are forthcoming because of the embarrassment which verbalization would cause.

As menstruation may produce fear and doubt in the girl, so the first nocturnal emission may seriously disturb the boy. Advance information may serve only to mitigate the sense of shame and the fear of loss of vitality. This is also the time when bodily urges to autoeroticism or masturbation are very powerful. Adolescent boys in a larger proportion than adolescent girls apparently engage in masturbatory practices. A partial explanation for this may be that the sex organs of the male are chiefly external to the body, whereas the opposite is true of the female. Furthermore, the sex drive is more localized in the male and more diffused in the female. Whatever the reason, it is probable that few boys go through the period of adolescence without engaging in such practices, however mild and infrequent in individual cases. The same can probably be said for a majority of girls.

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[14] Edward W. Dempsey, "Homeostasis," *Handbook of Experimental Psychology*, ed. S. S. Stevens (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1951), p. 221.

[15] Dennis, *The Adolescent*, op. cit., p. 641.

Psychologists and medical men agree that such practices are not physiologically harmful but are instead the normal accompaniments of growing up. Excessive indulgence may breed habits which will make later sex adjustments difficult and in some instances impossible. But these are the exceptional and not the usual situations. As Squier says: "The practice is very common, occurring at one time or another in fully 85 per cent of all people. . . . Auto-eroticism in moderation is quite compatible with good health; and it yields easily and naturally, in almost all instances, to replacement by heterosexual success in marriage." [16]

Although no physical harm results, the beliefs, attitudes, and emotional accompaniments of masturbation can nevertheless be extremely harmful. "The folklore of masturbation has probably bred more emotional conflicts," says Gallagher, "than any other single aspect of sex misinformation. . . . Masturbation will not make the adolescent insane, stunt his growth, affect his acne, make him ill, or hurt him physically." [17] Even with the wisest counsel, however, the atmosphere of adolescence is so emotionally charged as to produce fear, guilt feelings, shame, and a sense of inferiority in the healthy boy or girl. When these normal reactions are intensified by misguided instruction that masturbation is a "menace," the adjustment problems of the adolescent are compounded.

Social Factors in Adolescence

All societies recognize the physiological transition from childhood to adulthood as a critical phase in the life-cycle. Adolescence is likewise culturally defined. Different societies celebrate the passage at various ages, which indicates that they are recognizing *social* rather than biological maturity. "In order to understand puberty institutions," says Ruth Benedict, "we do not most need analyses of the necessary nature of *rites de passage*; we need rather to know what is identified in different cultures with the beginning of adulthood and their methods of admitting to the new status."[18]

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[16] Raymond Squier, "The Medical Basis of Intelligent Sex Practice," *Plan for Marriage*, ed. Joseph Kirk Folsom (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1938), chap. 6, p. 137.

[17] J. Roswell Gallagher, *Understanding Your Son's Adolescence* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1951), pp. 97-99.

In some societies, adulthood means participation in warfare, in others admission to ceremonial pursuits, in others knowledge of certain group magical activities, and in still others privileges associated with membership in male cults. In our society, adulthood means the achievement of psychological and economic independence and the consequent ability to marry and become the head of a family. Such a condition comes long after biological maturity. Much of our adolescent storm and stress accordingly occurs during the years between the attainment of physiological adulthood and its social counterpart.

In simpler societies, the child may reach intellectual, emotional, economic, and social maturity at the age of fourteen. In contemporary society, such maturity is not possible until much later. State laws define an individual as capable of making an independent decision to marry at age eighteen, and the individual is considered capable of bearing arms in defense of the nation at the same age. On the other hand, political maturity as evidenced by the privilege of voting does not begin until twenty-one. These ages reflect historical tradition and other factors, and perhaps none of them accurately represents the age at which the person arrives at complete self-direction in twentieth-century America. An objective study of the problem would doubtless show that modern youth does not arrive at full maturity, on the average, until well beyond the magical twenty-first birthday.

The consequences of this wide gap between the attainment of physiological and social maturity are clear. The combination of a powerful sexual urge and the rigid taboo against premarital sex relationships is certain to lead to tensions. By comparing primitive cultures allowing a large measure of premarital sex freedom with others that have strong prohibitions against such conduct, Margaret Mead concluded that adolescence in the former was associated with less instability than in the latter.[19] Repression of the powerful sex drive complicates the problem of growing up in our society.

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[18] Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture* (New York: Penguin Books, Inc., 1946), p. 23.

[19] Margaret Mead, "Adolescence in Primitive and Modern Society," *The New Generation: a Symposium*, ed. V. F. Calverton and S. D. Schmalhausen (New York: Macaulay, 1930).

Cf. also Margaret Mead, *Growing Up in New Guinea* (New York: William Morrow & Company, 1930).

Another result of the gap between physical and social maturity is the continuation of dependence on the parents. This takes the form of emotional, as well as economic, dependence. We shall consider the problem of adolescent dependence in more detail below. We may suggest here that the majority of American parents, especially those of the middle class, appear to *overprotect*, rather than *underprotect*, their children.[20] In a sense this behavior is culturally dictated and is abetted by the fact that the family unit is small and the emotional attachments intense.

In his demands for independence, the adolescent fails to realize that his parents could not grant this independence, no matter how much they might desire to do so. The more complex the social system, the greater is the necessity for long periods of formal education and preparation for full adult participation. Consequently, the dependence of the young will continue to be prolonged. The more dynamic the society, furthermore, the greater will be the cultural gap between the generations and the more truth there will be in the adolescent criticism that parents are "old-fashioned." A dynamic society necessitating prolonged immaturity thus provides the cultural setting for acute parent-child conflict.[21]

In our society, furthermore, the adolescent is living in three social worlds. These worlds overlap, it is true, but they have different rules and expectations. In the first place, there is the world of the family, which the adolescent is reluctant to leave and the parent is reluctant to have him leave. The second social world is that of the peer group, whose demands are extremely strong and often at variance with those of the parental family. In the third place, the adolescent is entering the larger adult world, in which he will soon have to make his way as best he can, without benefit of parental affection. The shadow of this third world is often merely on the adolescent horizon, but its presence is nevertheless felt. Growing up in a modern, secular society is a difficult experience.[22]

Within our own society, there are various subcultural differences in the adjustments of adolescence. There appears, for example, to be a

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[20] Arnold W. Green, "The Middle-Class Male Child and Neurosis," *American Sociological Review*, February 1946, XI, 31-41.

[21] Kingsley Davis, "The Sociology of Parent-Youth Conflict," *American Sociological Review*, August 1940, V, 523-35.

[22] James H. S. Bossard, *The Sociology of Child Development* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1948), pp. 425-27.

difference between social levels regarding the degree of adolescent-parent adjustment. In general, adolescents in families with a comparatively high socio-economic level seem to adjust better to their parents than do adolescents in lower-level families. This is not, of course, the only factor explaining adolescent-parent adjustment, for such factors as residence, size of the family, broken home, and the employment status of the mother are also significant.[23] The ecological position of the family in the community is associated with socio-economic level, and this general factor also doubtless accounts for some of the difference. Furthermore, education is associated roughly with socio-economic level, which has a further bearing upon the situation. Whatever the reason or combination of reasons, it is clear that adolescent-parent conflict is not uniform in all segments of the social structure.

From Dependence to Independence

In adolescence, the child is moving rapidly from the dependence of childhood to the relative independence of adult status. We have used the expression "relative" in the second instance, inasmuch as there is no such thing as an absolutely independent adult. Human beings cannot exist in isolation from their fellows, and hence society must always be an interdependent organism. The individual never completely lives unto himself, however often he may so claim. Whether we like it or not, the bell tolls for each of us.

The movement from dependence to independence does not occur only at adolescence. Rather is it a process that begins as early as the second or third year and continues slowly and haltingly for the succeeding fifteen years. The various resistances to parental authority during these years are symptoms of growing personal independence. The acceptance of responsibility for cleanliness, the insistence on the right to select his own playmates, the assertion of his rights in the play group—in these and countless other ways the child is growing up. Parents often fail to understand what is going on and to make full utilization of these initial steps in the development of independence.

The great spurt in physical growth comes at adolescence, and the great leap forward to independence likewise comes at this period. This is the time when the individual makes great strides in moving out from under the family roof, both literally and figuratively. The conflicts and tensions going on in parents and adolescents alike have been incisively expressed by Drs. Levy and Munroe.[24] Educated parents know intellectually that at age 13 or 14 every child comes to the point where he desires to be independent. With this knowledge at their disposal, the parents understand theoretically what is happening. But their logic often does not prove adequate to meet the life-situation.

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[23] Ivan Nye, "Adolescent-Parent Adjustment—Socio-Economic Level as a Variable," *American Sociological Review*, June 1951, XVI, 341-49.

Intellectually, therefore, the parents are aware of the importance of their child's independence if he is to achieve full maturity. At the same time, they have been behaving for so many years as loving parents of a relatively dependent child that they have extreme difficulty in freeing themselves from these emotional chains. To "let go the hand" of a child who has been dependent on the parent for many years may be as difficult and painful as was the initial birth. The parent knows the child must achieve independence; at the same time, his entire habit system wants to keep the child dependent.

On the side of the adolescent, the conflict is equally severe and baffling. In some respects, the tensions are doubtless greater, for the adolescent cannot have the understanding that the parents have. The boy or girl is in rebellion against parental restraints in what seems like a complete and final declaration of independence. But it is far from final. The adolescent wants freedom, but he does not want it too quickly. He is extremely vocal in his demands that he be treated as a full-grown man, while at the same time unconsciously feeling his need for the security of the family. Unwilling to admit his feelings of insecurity that make him want to remain dependent, he *projects* on to his parents his aggressive attitudes and asserts (to himself) that they are denying him the rights of rebellion.

Because of these inner conflicts, the adolescent vacillates. One day he is openly defiant and the next day he is the "lovely, reasonable child" (in the estimation of his parents) that he has always been.[25] Some adolescents come to such a pass that they are sure their parents "simply do not understand them" and therefore feel that they must leave an intolerable home environment. When and if they do depart from the household, they may get a long way from home physically, but they do not go far emotionally. The wise parent who occasionally gives the adolescent all the rope he wants finds that the latter does not want quite as much as has been proffered.

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[24] John Levy and Ruth Munroe, *The Happy Family* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1938), pp. 9 ff.

[25] Farnham, *The Adolescent*, chap. V.

The concrete ways in which this revolt manifests itself are so well known as to require only passing comment. This is the time when the child expresses surprised indignation that his parents know so little about everything. Argument for the sake of argument, often taking the form of extreme negativism, characterizes the relationships between children and parents. Various devices are utilized by the rebels to demonstrate that the old canons of superordination and subordination are no longer docilely accepted. These forms of insubordination include threats to run away, conscious and deliberate disobedience, shutting oneself up in one's room and sulking, hysterical weeping, inviting punishment in order to become a hero-martyr, and countless other techniques.

Early adolescence is the age when most young people have their first jobs and earn their first wages. Hence the earning and spending of money have considerable significance in terms of developing maturity. Where the boy or girl is dependent on a weekly allowance, the conflict over money between parents and children is frequently an overt expression of other tensions. These conflicts are not necessarily minimized where the adolescent works and has his own wages, for here too the parents often feel they should exercise control over the manner in which the money is spent. In a society where pecuniary values are so important, it is natural that the maturing child desires the feeling of power derived from plenty of spending money.

This method of asserting one's growing independence is one of the factors leading to juvenile stealing and other forms of delinquency. The growing commercialization of recreation likewise means that money is increasingly important for the adolescent. Where recreation has left the home, young people find it impossible to compete with others of their age group without the expenditure of money. Since this is the age of first love affairs, money is even more important because of the feeling of maturity that attaches to taking the sweetheart to the movies, the drugstore, or a dance.

As a consequence of wartime experience and the postwar boom, adolescents have had more money to spend during the past decade than has been their normal lot. The long-range consequences of this increased wage-earning experience will be difficult to assess. The time of maturity has doubtless been significantly advanced during this period, in view of the part which money and its use play in making young people feel they are grown up. Between 1940 and 1949, there was an increase of approximately one million persons aged fourteen through seventeen in the labor force in the United States.[26] Adolescents in great numbers are thus experiencing the heady medicine of high wages and are enjoying the feeling of economic independence associated therewith.

In his search for independence from the family, the adolescent often merely substitutes one dependence for another. He wishes to escape the authority of the family, but he willingly accepts the authority of the peer-group. His basic insecurity causes him to submerge himself in the peer-group and to give a loyalty thereto transcending that given to his family. As Margaret Mead says in this general connection, ". . . all the immediate models for the content of behavior, the clothes one wears, the games one plays, the books one reads, the radio programs one listens to" [27] are set by the group.

This group conformity may take a variety of forms. At one stage, the adolescent will abandon his conformity in favor of self-assertiveness and bizarre behavior. He will try to attract attention to himself by excessive boasting, unconventional dress, and other forms of conspicuous behavior. Although professing to scorn the judgments of the peer-group, however, he is merely varying the process of gaining status and has not basically modified his desire for group approval. At this stage, furthermore, he begins to lose interest in such inclusive groups as the boy scouts and turns to groups based upon social discrimination. Such organizations as fraternities, sororities, and clubs are based upon the exclusion of social "inferiors," whether in terms of race, religion, or class differences. These groups tend to reinforce prejudices implanted earlier in the child by the family.[28]

Adolescence and Psychosexual Development

Adolescence has also been characterized as the time when the boy begins to fall out of love with his parents and begins to fall in love with a girl. This is the period when boys and girls are learning to play their appropriate sex roles. Some of the elements in these roles, as we have indicated, arise directly from physiological changes. Other elements reflect the expectations of the society. These expectations are complex and many of them are contradictory, so that the adolescent is often confused as to what his behavior should be. He acquires some of these cultural expectations from his parents, others from the adolescent peer-group, and still others from such media as the movies, television, and the mass circulation magazines. Adolescence is, in short, the time when girls are learning to be girls (and ultimately women) and boys are learning to be boys (and ultimately men), as those roles are defined in our society.[29]

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[26] Bureau of the Census, "School Enrollment of Workers in the United States: October, 1949," *Current Population Reports: Labor Force*, May 3, 1950, Series P-50, No. 23.

[27] Margaret Mead, "Problems of a Wartime Society—The Cultural Picture," *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, October 1943, XIII, 597.

[28] Hurlock, *Adolescent Development*, chap. 5.

The general hypotheses of Freud concerning the typical stages in psychosexual development are still widely followed, although they have been amplified and modified by subsequent research.[30] Three general stages in psychosexual progression were postulated by Freud —the diffused sexuality of infancy, the latency period, and finally adolescence.[31] In the first stage, the infant appears to derive pleasure from a variety of so-called erogenous zones, such as the oral, anal, and genital zones. These pleasure-reactions become localized in the genital regions by the age of four or five. The earliest emotional attachment is with the mother, since she is usually the parent who is present to provide affection and physical services. This period is the foundation for the Oedipus complex, by which Freud designated the deep emotional attachment of the male child for the mother. This attachment may continue into adult life and interfere with the normal psychosexual development of the boy. Where the attachment is rooted in the father-daughter relationship, the situation is designated as the Electra complex.[32]

These complexes have been subjected to extensive analysis in recent years. In studies of the courtship behavior of adolescents and postadolescents, Robert F. Winch has concluded that the attachment of mother-son is more binding than that of father-daughter in our society, because the role of the mother is so important during the early years.[33] In adolescence, the emancipation of the son from parental influence is apparently both more important and more difficult than that of the daughter. The middle-class family, indeed, seems to encourage the emancipation of the boy and discourage that of the girl.[34]

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[29] For a perceptive statement of this process, see Margaret Mead, *Male and Female* (New York: William Morrow & Company, 1949).

[30] Certain of the Freudian hypotheses have been subjected to rigorous analysis by William H. Sewell, "Infant Training and the Personality of the Child," *American Journal of Sociology*, September 1952, LVIII, 150-59.

[31] See Freud, *The Basic Writings of Sigmund Freud* (New York: Modern Library, 1938).

[32] See John C. Flügel, *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Family* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1926).

The society thus defines the emotional independence of the boy as more important than that of the girl, whereas the latter may merely transfer her affection from the father to the husband. In other words, "To achieve their sex-roles, males must achieve independence which means loosening their Oedipal attachments to their mothers; females, on the other hand, need . . . only to transfer their dependence from father to husband." [35] In the latter case, the girl will look to her husband for many of the same traits she respected in her father. She will therefore be ready to submit to the authority patterns established at an early age with her male parent.

At the age of five or six, the Oedipal stage normally gives way to the so-called latency period, which continues up to the age of puberty. During this period, the child normally severs his previous attachment for the parent of the opposite sex and begins to identify himself with the parent of the same sex. In this way, he begins to learn the sex roles that will follow him through life. The boy identifies himself with his father and the girl with her mother in this early polarization along masculine and feminine lines.[36] This identification with the parent of the same sex is accompanied by association with members of the same sex group. Boys play with boys and girls with girls and each demonstrates a comparative lack of interest in the other.

Latency is also the gang age, when the boy normally refuses to have anything to do with girls in general and any one girl in particular. There is some evidence that the latency period, which Freud considered to be exclusively conditioned by physiological changes, is also determined, in part at least, by socio-cultural factors. In primitive societies where the mores do not forbid sexual experimentation in prepubertal children, the latter apparently have an active sex life from the age of five or six until adolescence and thereafter. In our society, these activities may be sublimated or repressed by the mores, and the child forced to assume the role of sexual latency. The researches of Kinsey and associates thus state that orgasm has been observed in males "of every age from 5 months to adolescence." [37] Whatever the social, cultural, or physiological factors, however, the years immediately prior to puberty are marked in both boys and girls by a calculated indifference to the opposite sex.

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[33] Winch, "Further Data and Observations on the Oedipus Hypothesis: the Consequence of an Inadequate Hypothesis," *American Sociological Review*, December 1951, XVI, 784-95.

[34] Mirra Komarovsky, "Functional Analysis of Sex Roles," *American Sociological Review*, August 1950, XV, 508-16.

[35] Robert F. Winch, "Some Data Bearing on the Oedipus Hypothesis," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, July 1950, XLV, 481-89, p. 488.

[36] Phyllis Blanchard, "Adolescent Experience in Relation to Personality and Behavior," *Personality and the Behavior Disorders*, ed. James McV. Hunt (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1944), II, 697.

The latency period is followed by early adolescence, with an abrupt change in the attitude toward members of the opposite sex. The first love affair may be of amused interest to the elders, but it is of cosmic importance to the early teen-ager. All of the elements of romantic love are present, at least in a rudimentary state. There is the mutual idealization, the making of grandiose plans for the future, the fantasies and daydreaming, the soul-searching, the sharing of intimate experiences, and the quest for emotional security that is characteristic of romantic love in its more developed stages. As we have noted in chapter 7, adolescence is typically a time when the ego is uncertain and the individual consequently seeks the emotional assurance that he is loved.[38]

Adolescence is further marked by the suppression of sexual drives that have now become fully developed. The norms of a complex social system forbid the complete expression of the sexual impulse, although the evidence gathered by Kinsey strongly suggests that wide class differentials exist in the obedience of these norms. Upper-level males, measured in terms of educational attainment and occupational status, have a far lower rate of premarital sexual intercourse than do lower-level males. Upper-level males are thus obliged to repress or sublimate their sexual impulses to a greater extent than lower-level males. The social norms internalized in the superego can suppress these urges, but cannot eliminate them. As a result, the tensions in upper-level males are resolved by a variety of substitute outlets. Among these outlets are fantasy thinking, day dreaming, nocturnal emissions, masturbation, and petting. Some of these means are consciously employed to relieve the sexual tensions, whereas others do not involve any conscious direction.[39]

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[37] Alfred C. Kinsey, *et al.*, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Company, 1948), p. 177.

[38] Hugo G. Beigel, "Romantic Love," *American Sociological Review*, June 1951, XVI, 326-34.

The failure to achieve normal heterosexuality during adolescence may lead to a variety of unsuccessful adjustments in later life. If masturbation becomes a fixed habit carried over into adulthood, this regression to infantile auto-eroticism may incapacitate the individual for adequate marital relationships. Established patterns of homosexuality present even more serious obstacles to adult heterosexual behavior in marriage. For our purposes, the causal factors in these patterns are not important. In the present context, we are primarily interested in the fact that the bases for these and other sexual maladjustments are laid during the adolescent period.[40]

The Adolescent and Religion

In the light of the dramatic physiological, social, and emotional changes occurring at this time of life, it is not surprising that the early adolescent has been proverbially interested in religion. Adolescence is the period when the child is declaring his independence of the parents and preparing for the assumption of full adult responsibilities. What then happens to the habits of submission and obedience to authority arising from the early years of experience in the family milieu? The patterns of subordination built into the child over such a long period cannot be completely discarded as a result of the adolescent declaration of independence.

Hence there may be merit in the contention that the habits of reverence, submission, and obedience are transferred from the early father as parent to the Universal Father. The rebellion from parental authority may thus involve the search for a point on which to fix the established reactions of subordination. Inasmuch as complete individual independence is inconsistent with social order, this transfer of allegiance from the narrow circle of the family to the wider arena of the universe carries with it no derogatory implications.[41]

This widening of the universe of the adolescent, when added to the fact that the age is one of great dreams and idealism, helps to explain the developing interest in social reform and reconstruction. The youngster at this time has a keen desire, abetted by the belief that all things are possible, to right the inequities of the social and economic system. He is particularly responsive to appeals for such concrete expressions of altruism as aid to the poor and underprivileged in his home community and in foreign lands as well. Social service work exercises an unusual fascination for him. The number of adolescents who resolve to dedicate themselves to righting wrong and to serving their fellow men has no observable correlation with the number who, at a maturer level, actually carry out their resolves.

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[39] Kinsey, *et al.*, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*, chap. 10.

[40] Cf. Havelock Ellis, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, 2 vols. (New York: Random House, 1936).

[41] John C. Flügel, *Man, Morals and Society* (London: Duckworth, 1945).

The mental and emotional conflicts resulting from the profound changes of early adolescence cannot go unresolved. If religion is primarily an appeal to the emotions, then it would be strange if that age which is uniquely marked by emotional turmoil should not also be the age when religion exercises a tremendous appeal. The daydreaming that makes Utopias fits in nicely with the high idealism that religion emphasizes. The adolescent feelings of guilt can be banished by the catharsis of religious participation. The insecurities and inadequacies of the individual have their resolution in the atmosphere of emotional security which has ever been a primary service of religion.

Intellectually, this period is also marked by serious doubts about the teachings of religion, teachings that have heretofore been accepted without question. The young child lives in a world peopled by creatures of his imagination. In such a world, the folklore and moral tales growing out of formal religious instruction have a definite place. The adolescent likes to think he has outgrown this world, and in some respects he has. He wants to face the realities of life, however far he comes from following his good intentions. In addition, this is the time when the adolescent first asks himself seriously the meaning and purpose of life. In asking these questions, he is faced with the necessity of working out a philosophy of life, involving his relations to God, to the world, and to his fellow men.

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21

THE PERSONALITY OF THE PARENT

Personality development is a process, beginning at birth and continuing through the seven ages of man. In this section, we have examined the family as "a unity of interacting personalities," with emphasis upon the role of the family in infancy, childhood, and adolescence. These are the stages in the life sequence when the most rapid changes are taking place. The dynamic approach to personality also implies, however, that nothing in the life-span of the individual is unimportant to him. We shall therefore pass on to another phase in personality development, the achievement of parenthood. This completes the cycle that begins with the infant in the family of orientation and ends with the parent in his own family of procreation.

The Cultural Basis of Parenthood

As with other group standards, the norms with respect to reproduction and parenthood are culturally determined. In the ancient Hebrew society, the bearing and rearing of children was regarded as absolutely essential. It was considered a great misfortune not to have a male child to carry on the patriarchal functions. The intense desire for children is the only possible explanation for the curious (to us) custom known as the levirate. If a Hebrew had the ill fortune to die childless, it was incumbent upon his brother to marry the widow, so that a male child might be born to carry on the name and estates of the deceased. The first-born child of the new union was considered the son and heir of the one who died without issue.[1]

In societies with predominantly religious norms, the social definition of the duty to procreate takes the form of divine injunction. The modern words of Pope Pius XI echo sentiments that have come down almost without change through the centuries. "Thus amongst the blessings of marriage, the child holds the first place, and indeed the Creator of the human race Himself . . . taught this when, instituting marriage in Paradise, He said to our first parents, and through them to all future spouses, 'Increase and multiply, and fill the earth.' "[2] In colonial New England, with its Calvinistic background, the people obeyed literally the Biblical injunction with respect to the joys of parenthood. Large families were the rule, and many women bore more than a dozen children. In a new country, a new child represented another pair of hands to help in the incessant labor of a pioneer existence.[3]

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[1] Deuteronomy 25:5-10.

In furtherance of these traditional factors, the contemporary social norms are still based upon the expectation that parenthood will be the normal culmination of marriage.[4] As a child, the girl is encouraged to play mother to her dolls, and the pattern of her future status is thus fashioned early in life. Society has long utilized a variety of other devices to exalt the concept of motherhood and to define as "normal" that behavior which leads to parental responsibilities.[5] The universal sympathy for a married couple who have tried unsuccessfully to have children is another indication of the widespread approbation of parenthood.

The inflexible social disapproval of abortion is another indication of the social attitudes toward parenthood. Abortion is legally defined as "the expulsion of the fetus from the uterus (womb) at any time before its term of gestation is complete."[6] Abortion is divided into three categories: spontaneous, therapeutic, and criminal. We are concerned here primarily with criminal abortion, which is the deliberate interruption of pregnancy by the mother or by another person. Recent estimates point to approximately one million abortions annually in the United States, of which possibly one-third are of the criminal variety.[7] The great majority of these deliberate interruptions of preg-

[2] Encyclical of Pope Pius XI, *Casti Connubii, Christian Marriage* (New York: The America Press, 1936), pp. 4-5.

[3] Arthur W. Calhoun, *A Social History of the American Family,* 1 vol. (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1945), I, 87.

[4] Dorothy W. Baruch, *Parents Can Be People* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1944).

[5] Leta S. Hollingsworth, "Social Devices for Impelling Women to Bear and Rear Children," *American Journal of Sociology,* July 1916, XXII, 19-29.

[6] Russell S. Fisher, "Criminal Abortion," *Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology, and Police Science,* July-August 1951, XLII, 242.

[7] *Ibid.*

nancy are undergone by married women, who thereby resort to criminal measures to interfere with the reproductive process.[8]

Despite strong social disapproval, hundreds of thousands of married women every year still take dangerous and unlawful steps to interrupt the process of becoming a parent. This statement should be qualified somewhat, however, by the fact that most criminal abortions seemingly involve multiple pregnancies, rather than an initial pregnancy. In other words, it is estimated that only three per cent of first pregnancies are interrupted in this fashion, whereas the incidence is five times as great with the fourth pregnancy.[9] Married women still welcome the coming of children, but they have a strong desire to limit this process after their families have reached a comparatively small size. The rebellion is not against parenthood as such but rather against too frequent exercise of the reproductive function.

Cultural Norms and Individual Performance

In our society, the individual thus responds to cultural expectations with respect to parenthood, but in terms of small rather than large families. The cultural norms have changed, as we have indicated above, and the various pressures combine to bring about a new norm of the small family. When young people of marriageable age are asked whether they expect to have children, only a small minority reply in the negative. At the same time, they indicate clearly that their norm is the small family. A study of Maryland youth 16 to 24 years of age revealed that the median number of children desired was 2.7. When the responses were broken down in terms of farm, village, town, and city, there was comparatively little variation in the number of children desired. The small family ideal is apparently an increasingly rural, as well as an urban, phenomenon.[10]

An intensive study of 6,551 native-white Indianapolis couples of virtually completed fertility (wife aged 40 to 44) showed an increase over a 31-year period (1910–1941) in the preference for the small family. When these couples were classified in 1941 according to the total number of live births, 18.8 per cent were found to be childless, 46.8 per cent had 1 or 2 children, 15 per cent 3 children, and 20 per cent 4 children or more. When the results of this sampling were compared with data drawn from 1910 census records for Indianapolis, the proportion of small families showed an increase between 1910 and 1941. In the former year (1910), slightly over one-half of the families had none to 2 children; this category represented approximately two-thirds of the 1941 totals. In the 31-year interval, the proportion of childless couples likewise increased from 13.8 per cent to 18.8 per cent.[11]

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[8] The classic study of abortion is that of Frederick J. Taussig, *Abortion, Spontaneous and Induced, Medical and Social Aspects* (St. Louis: C. V. Mosby Company, 1936).

[9] Marie E. Kopp, *Birth Control in Practice* (New York: Robert M. McBride & Company, 1934), pp. 125-26.

[10] Paul H. Landis, *Population Problems* (New York: American Book Company, 1943), p. 77.

The social expectation is that marriage will eventuate in parenthood. Individual motivations are also significant. When 400 alumni of Princeton representing classes from 1900 to 1921 were questioned on the reason for wanting children, the answer most frequently given was that of desiring the companionship of the young.[12] Other answers were: the perpetuation of the family, the creation and development of new life, and the desire for a real embodiment of the ideal relationship between parents. Less frequently indicated were: the desire for companionship in old age, the fulfillment of a social obligation, or the acceptance of a social convention.

The interrogated found it difficult to classify their own motivations in any simple answer or combination of answers. Furthermore, such questions must of necessity be put in terms of existent cultural definitions. Hence there is no way of telling to what extent the answers are rationalizations rather than the real revelations of underlying motivation. It is suggestive, however, that social obligation is not recognized as so important as the desire for companionship or that of creating new life.

Of the men in this group whose families were completed, only 29 per cent indicated that they had attained the ideal number of children. The group as a whole said they would like to have had an average of 3.9 children, which was 1.5 more than they actually had. The answers most frequently given as to why the actual number fell short of the desired ideal were: limited financial means, physical hazards of childbearing, the trials and restrictions of parenthood, and physical inability to have more. These answers are revealing. In view of the middle-class goal of success, the zeal for upward mobility limits additional children. Furthermore, this group was honest in admitting that the responsibilities of parenthood also carry with them many frustrations.[13]

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[11] Clyde V. Kiser and P. K. Whelpton, "Social and Psychological Factors Affecting Fertility, Part II," *The Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly*, January 1944, XXII, 72-105.

[12] Charles Pugh Dennison, "Parenthood Attitudes of College Men," *Journal of Heredity*, December 1940, XXXI, 527-31.

Of the Princeton men, 5 per cent indicated no particular liking for children. Dr. Paul Popenoe secured information from college students on the basis of their intimate knowledge of 862 couples who had not had any children and were not likely to have them. The reason given for 8 per cent of the cases was dislike for children. In 31 per cent, the explanation involved such things as spoiling the looks of the woman, disturbing the life of the couple, and coming between husband and wife. In only 16 per cent of the instances was economic pressure considered the primary motivating influence.[14]

Approximately one in seven married women now comes to the end of the childbearing period without having had at least one child. A large proportion doubtless comprises those who have been involuntarily childless. There are no indications that the increasing democratization of contraceptive information and the complexities of an urban, technological society are leading to any wholesale renunciation of parenthood. Indeed, the continued high number and rate of births indicate that the desire to have children is in no danger of extinction. In the year 1951, the number of births reached an all-time peak of 3,758,000, as compared to the previous high record of 3,699,940 in 1947. The rate for 1951 was 25.0 per 1,000 population, which was the highest in recent years, with the sole exception of the figure of 26.6 reached in 1947.[15] The biological urge to reproduce one's kind combined with the powerful cultural expectations approving parenthood therefore seem to guarantee the relative stability of that status. At the same time, present life-conditions will doubtless continue to limit parenthood to a restricted number of children.

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[13] Cf. also Clarence J. Gamble, "The College Birthrate," *Journal of Heredity*, December 1947, XXXVIII, 355-62.

[14] Paul Popenoe, "Motivation of Childless Marriages," *Journal of Heredity*, December 1936, XXVII, 469-72.

[15] Federal Security Agency, National Office of Vital Statistics, "Annual Summary for 1951: United States, by State," *Monthly Vital Statistics Bulletin*, September 17, 1952, Vol. 14, No. 13.

Culture and Voluntary Parenthood

For the first time in history, human beings have the knowledge that enables them to decide whether or not they will be parents, and when. Until relatively recent times, parenthood followed marriage as inevitably as morning succeeds night. Modern developments in the field of contraception and the increasing availability of such knowledge make it possible for a couple to determine when they desire to have children, how many they will have, and how they will be spaced. To be sure, such choices are not infallible. No contraceptive measure is one hundred per cent effective, and there will always be wide variations in the effectiveness with which the devices are employed. Nevertheless, it is roughly accurate to say that a couple may postpone the assumption of parenthood by the employment of contraceptive measures most suited to their individual temperaments and wishes. Even if they decide to use no contraceptives and to accept the possibility of pregnancy at once, the time of conception may vary from one month to more than a year.[16]

The advantages claimed for the postponement of parenthood involve the following considerations. In terms of the lifelong association of marriage, the initial stages of adjustment are crucial. Every marriage is a new and undefined situation, and the manner in which the interlocking patterns will develop depends a great deal on the adjustments made during the initial year. An immediate pregnancy runs the risk of complicating the picture. Even if the pregnancy is entirely normal, the physiological and psychological adjustments of the wife are difficult. The husband also has real problems of adaptation to the new experience. If the pregnancy is complicated by some health or other factor, it may seriously interfere with the inauguration of successful husband-wife relationships.

Another reason frequently given for the desire to postpone the first child is economic. The desire to be able to provide for the needs of the potential mother and child in the best manner available, characteristic of American middle-class parental attitudes, means that many young people do not want to undertake parenthood before the necessary financial resources are in sight. The husband is ordinarily just commencing his business or professional career, and his income may not be considered sufficient to justify the beginning of a family. It may even have been insufficient to undertake marriage, but the wife may have decided to get a job or to continue one already undertaken. The employment of the wife and the necessity to continue working may be another reason for the postponement of parenthood.

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[16] Raymond Pearl, *The Natural History of Population* (London: Oxford University Press, 1939), p. 206.

There is evidence that parenthood may be permanently renounced if economic insecurity becomes chronic. In their analysis of the data on 1,444 "relatively fecund" couples in Indianapolis, Kiser and Whelpton came to the following conclusion: "The size of 'planned' families and particularly the size of 'number and spacing planned' families is directly associated with economic security regardless of differences in socio-economic status. There is a particularly strong tendency for childlessness to be associated with economic insecurity among 'number and spacing planned' families. This accounts for much of the direct relation of fertility to economic security among these families." [17]

The index of economic security used by these investigators was such as to contain evidence of real, as opposed to imagined, insecurity. For the average young couple, there is a real hazard in postponing the first child for economic reasons, unless they have decided in advance that they will have a child after a given time. Anyone familiar with household economy, family budgets, and competitive standards of living knows that, for the majority of American families, the desire for goods and services keeps well in advance of the money income. Except for a fortunate minority, the time may never come when a married couple *think* they are in an economic position to have a family. Postponing the coming of children until economic resources are considered adequate may lead to a time when it is no longer advisable to have them.

Another risk arises from postponing the coming of children. The practice has been commended on the ground that the way should be clear for the formation of satisfactory conjugal habit patterns in the early marital period. Such interaction patterns can become so fixed over a period of years, however, that a third member may not be welcome. The entrance of the child into the family psychodrama means that there can no longer be the exclusive and reciprocal focusing of the interests and attentions of the marital partners on each other. The child must be fitted into the constellation of the family; time, energies, and affections must be transferred from the conjugal to the parent-child relationship. Postponement of the arrival of the child can so establish the marital habit-patterns that accepting a new unit into the family configuration may be met with great emotional difficulties.

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[17] Clyde V. Kiser and P. K. Whelpton, "Social and Psychological Factors Affecting Fertility. XI, The Interrelation of Fertility, Fertility Planning, and Feeling of Economic Security," *Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly*, January 1951, XXIX, 112.

The maximum exercise of the reproductive function in the contemporary family occurs in the age group 20-29 for the wife. Approximately 60 per cent of all children in any one year are born to mothers in this age group.[18] The median age of the wife at the time of the birth of the first child is 22.6 years and the median age at the birth of the last child is 27.2 years. This is further evidence that the bulk of the child-bearing occurs to women in their twenties, with surprisingly little variation in recent decades. The median age in 1890 for the wife at the birth of her first child was 23.0 years, as compared to the aforementioned 22.6 years in 1940.[19]

This does not necessarily mean that the twenties are the optimum (that is, the best) age for a married woman to have her first child. Customs and practices with respect to age at marriage and definitions of social maturity have a bearing on the age at which most women give birth to first children. The age of biological puberty in the female is about 13.5 years. The average girl is, it is true, apparently not ready for biological reproduction at this age. There seems to be a period of adolescent sterility between the onset of puberty and the time of nubility, or the completion of the maturation of the ovulatory process upon which reproduction is dependent.[20] But even if age fifteen were regarded as the average time at which girls were physiologically ready for reproduction, this might only indicate that from this year forward was an optimum *biological* period for reproducion. By generally accepted *social* definitions of maturity, girls of fifteen are not ready to assume the responsibilities of parenthood.

At the other end of the scale, for both biological and social reasons it is advisable that the first pregnancy not be postponed much beyond the thirtieth year. This is not to subscribe to the popular fallacy that it is dangerous for a woman past thirty to undertake her first pregnancy. Modern medical knowledge and advances in obstetrics make groundless the former fears relative to first pregnancies in the later reproductive years. Other reasons for not postponing parenthood are more cogent. Biological fecundity apparently undergoes a slow but gradual decline from a peak in the first half of the twenties.[21] Some decline in general health and vigor undoubtedly takes place from the mid-twenties to the mid-thirties. Furthermore, the longer the pregnancy is postponed, the wider will become the age gap between the generations. In a concrete family situation, this is reflected in the inadequacies of parents to meet the problems of adolescence when the mother is experiencing menopause and the father is approaching the first stages of senescence.

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[18] Bureau of the Census, *Vital Statistics of the United States, 1943*, Part II, p. 69 (Washington, 1945).

[19] Paul F. Glick, "The Family Cycle," *American Sociological Review*, April 1947, XII, 164-74, Table 1.

[20] M. F. Ashley-Montagu, "Adolescent Sterility in the Human Female," *Human Fertility*, June 1946, XI, 33-41.

Pregnancy and Prenatal Roles

The prenatal role introduces a new element into the personalities of husband and wife. The social relationships during pregnancy are important in setting the tone for the subsequent parental status. By their very nature, prenatal roles are transitory, for they comprise a comparatively short period in the total marital life. Furthermore, prenatal roles are no longer as common as they formerly were, when wives experienced many more pregnancies. Under earlier conditions, the prenatal role was more or less chronic in many families, whereas this role is comparatively rare in the contemporary middle-class family. When the modern young couple confirm their first suspicions of pregnancy, they are entering a new status with new roles. We may explore some of the implications of these new roles.[22]

The overt symptoms of a probable pregnancy are well known. The most obvious and significant is missing the menstrual flow. The wide variety of causes which can affect menstruation and the fact that it is not as regular as is popularly supposed mean that this is not an infallible sign. The skipping of a normal period may be also marked by slight tingling of the breasts. Though it is not universally present, most women will experience some nausea, varying in degree from slight discomfort to vomiting. This is known as "morning sickness," even though it is not always in evidence at that time of day. A fourth symptom is a tendency to pass urine more frequently than is considered normal for the individual.[23]

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[21] Raymond Pearl, *The Natural History of Population*, pp. 156 ff.

[22] For a further analysis of this new situation, cf. Francis E. Merrill, *Courtship and Marriage* (New York: The Dryden Press, 1949), chap. 11, "Prenatal Roles."

When these signs appear, it is advisable for the woman to visit a physician. Before he prescribes a regimen for the prenatal period, he wants to be certain of the fact of pregnancy, and therefore he will suggest that the patient return after a lapse of several weeks. By that time, the physician will be able to evaluate the symptoms and will be further aided by a manual examination. In order to be absolutely sure, however, he will recommend a test. The technical details of these tests need not detain us here. Suffice it to indicate that the fundamental principle underlying all of the tests is the observation of the effects on an animal of the injection of the woman's urine, containing gonadotropic hormone.[24]

The activity of various public and private agencies has publicized the importance of prenatal care so that it is now widely understood and accepted. The benefits in terms of health and well-being have been so dramatic that there is no hesitation in accepting high standards for prenatal care. "All pregnant women," says the United States Children's Bureau, "should be under medical care during their entire pregnancy, at the time of delivery, and during the puerperium. It is only by thorough prenatal care that diseases which may cause death or disability of either the mother or child may be avoided, arrested, or cured, and that the woman may maintain a physical condition that will enable her to withstand the unavoidable strain associated with labor and delivery." [25]

One of the diseases to be detected and cured is syphilis. A woman with syphilis can infect the child *in utero* to bring about what is known as congenital (as contrasted with hereditary) syphilis. This infection does not occur before the fourth month of pregnancy. The mother can be treated without harm to her or to the child. Hence it becomes possible to prevent entirely the transmission of this disease which, only a short time ago, caused the death of 25,000 babies annually.[26] A standard serological test for syphilis is now given in connection with the initial examination of the pregnant woman. Where infection is discovered and vigorous treatment undertaken prior to the fifth month of pregnancy, the percentage of syphilitic children born of infected mothers can be reduced from an estimated seventy per cent to seven per cent.[27]

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[23] United States Children's Bureau, *Prenatal Care*, Publication No. 4 (Washington, 1949).

[24] The tests having widest currency have been the Ascheim-Zondek (immature mice), Friedman (rabbits), Hogben (South African clawed toad), the male frog (*Rana pipiens*), and the rat tests.

Cf. Nicholson J. Eastman, *Williams Obstetrics*, 10th ed. (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1950), pp. 243-45.

[25] United States Children's Bureau, *Standards of Prenatal Care, an Outline for the Use of Physicians*, Publication No. 153 (Washington, 1940).

Another disease yielding to the advances of modern medicine is that of hemolytic disease of the fetus or newborn child. Until only a few years ago, doctors were puzzled by the fact that approximately one-half of one per cent of all pregnancies resulted in stillbirths or in deaths of newborn infants attributed to jaundice, anemia, etc. Furthermore, it was established that, once the pattern of such a disease of the fetus or newborn had been created for a given woman, it was repeated in subsequent pregnancies. Now it is known that this disease has an immunological basis arising from the blood-group differences between the fetus and the mother, or what is popularly known as the Rh-factor.

The trouble arises from the marriage of an Rh-negative woman to an Rh-positive man, a situation that occurs in about one in eight marriages. Consequently it has become standard procedure in prenatal care for the physician to determine the Rh-type of his patient as well as her previous history of blood transfusions. Likewise, he will want to know about the Rh-type of the husband since, if this were to be negative, there will be no problem. Frequent serological examinations of the patient, especially if it is not her first pregnancy, will determine the management of prenatal conditions, delivery, and neonatal care.[28]

In addition to these considerations, the physician will also want a complete health history of his patient. He will want to know about previous illnesses, especially those which may serve as possible dangers to pregnancy, such as tuberculosis, rheumatic fever, serious infections, heart diseases, accidents involving the abdomen and pelvis, as well as the circumstances attending previous pregnancies and childbearing. Such knowledge will not only aid him in formulating the correct regimen for the period of pregnancy, but also will point, in extreme instances, to the probable necessity of interrupting the pregnancy prior to term. A thorough physical examination will either confirm or remove any suspicion that such previous illnesses may have left their permanent effects. Such an examination will also include a thorough study of the abdomen and pelvis, in order to determine whether or not any difficulties are likely to interfere with normal delivery.

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[26] Thomas Parran and R. A. Vonderlehr, *Plain Words about Venereal Disease* (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, Inc., 1941).

[27] Bureau of Social Hygiene, Department of Health, New York City, *Syphilis in Pregnancy* (pamphlet). Undated.

[28] Milton S. Sacks, "Hemolytic Disease of the Fetus and Newborn," *Williams Obstetrics*, Eastman, pp. 1001 ff.

In the initial contacts with the doctor, the latter will indicate the probable date of delivery. This will be approximately 280 days from the beginning of the last monthly period. It may also be computed by counting back three calendar months from the day on which the last monthly period began and then adding seven days. This will enable the doctor and the patient to plan for the various stages of the pregnancy, including the time when the expectant mother will begin to feel life. Movement in the uterus first occurs at about four and one-half months.

The final services of the physician in connection with these earliest visits will be concerned with recommendations on what is usually called the hygiene of pregnancy. This involves such things as diet and exercise, clothing, care of the teeth, regulation of bowel movement, weight, and mental hygiene. The doctor will also indicate certain overt symptoms that should be reported immediately. He is especially interested in such symptoms as excessive vomiting, shortness of breath, severe pain in the lower abdomen, the appearance of any vaginal bleeding, dizziness, or acute illness of any kind. He will want to see the patient at frequent intervals, perhaps once monthly for the first six months and more often thereafter, at which times he will examine blood pressure, measure the increase in weight, and make the usual urine analysis. If it is the first pregnancy, the doctor may also want to interview the husband. The doctor knows how important it is for the husband to demonstrate true sympathy for his wife at a time when a certain amount of irritability, nervousness, fear, and uncertainty are normal accompaniments.

The husband will himself experience anxieties during this period. Where true conjugal affection exists, however, he will be able to steer a course between that variety of "sympathy" which thinks to overcome the complaints of his wife by ignoring them and that excessive sympathy which may lead her to a kind of pseudo-invalidism. The physician will be asked about sex relations during pregnancy, and his answer will be based on his estimate of the situation. In general, he will suggest to the husband that more consideration than usual is called for at this time. There is no reason why intercourse should not be continued until the last two months or six weeks of the pregnancy. The most hazardous time will usually be associated with the days during which the monthly period would otherwise have been taking place, especially if the woman has any tendency to abort. Sexual intercourse should be avoided entirely during the last month because of the danger of puerperal infection as a consequence of intercourse prior to the onset of labor.

Role Changes and Pregnancy

The husband and wife must both make adjustments to pregnancy. We may consider these adjustments in order of their seriousness. The husband may entertain various vague and irrational fears that the child will not be born normal and healthy, but these fears do not persist. He will experience interruptions in his usual business or social activities that can occasion some feelings of frustration. He may unconsciously sense that the elaborate preparations being made for the coming child may signal a gradual withdrawal of his wife's affections from him and their transference to the new member of the family. If his life-experiences have been unfortunate, he may not want to accept the coming responsibilities of parenthood.[29]

These negative aspects of approaching parenthood are usually more than offset by the feeling of euphoria that accompanies the hopes and expectations for a child. Fatherhood carries with it such a psychological and cultural aura that the coming event represents the culmination of deepseated wishes. However much of fantasy may be involved, great satisfactions are derived from speculating as to the sex of the child, the discussions about a name, and the imaginative planning of the entire career of the individual as yet unborn. These and countless other aspects of the pregnancy process are valuable assets in promoting the belief that the coming child will be a further link in a strong marital relationship.

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[29] Baruch, *Parents Can Be People*, p. 21.

For the wife, the situation is infinitely more complicated. It would be surprising indeed if the profound physiological changes occurring in her body did not have serious repercussions in her attitudes. For the first pregnancy, the adjustments of the initial months are the most difficult. The traditions of Western society have been so contradictory that various conflicts are inevitably mirrored in the mind of the prospective mother. The glorification of virginity has led to an exaltation of sexual innocence that is still reflected in an overzealous parental regard for rearing the girl in a kind of hothouse environment. This attitude precludes a frank acceptance of the simple biological facts about physiological reproduction. *Pari passu* with this ingrained attitude, there has also been a cultural glorification of the role of the mother. Hence the first conflict that must be resolved by the pregnant woman involves the willing acceptance of the elementary realities of biological reproduction.

Closely allied to this conflict is the realization that, as the pregnancy advances, there will occur a change in bodily weight and proportions. Fortunately, the traditional attitudes that the woman should remain in seclusion in the later weeks of pregnancy have been superseded by more intelligent practices. The old feelings of shame and apology not only have been given up by the women themselves, but there has also developed a public acceptance of the idea that the pregnant woman should carry on her usual activities as long as possible. Concern over her present looks, plus possible discomfort in the later stages of pregnancy, apparently do not greatly annoy the expectant mother. It is rather the concern that she may never again regain the youthful figure she once possessed. So strong are the cultural dictates about attractiveness of form and figure that the thought of losing them may engender an unconscious rejection of pregnancy.

Although a complete understanding of the role changes accompanying pregnancy must await further research, suggestive insights have been provided by psychoanalytic interpretations. There is, for example, a turning inward of the psychic energies so that pregnant women are often strongly introverted. Their interest is centered on that portion of the ego that is materialized in the developing embryo. There is complete identification of the mother and child—the I and the You—the ego and the non-ego. The successful psychological conclusion of pregnancy thus involves "making the child more and more an object, so that delivery does not have the effect of a painful separation from a part of the ego and a destructive psychic loss." [30]

This general hypothesis has been of great value in the analysis and treatment of mothers in child guidance clinics. Starting with the obvious identification of the mother and child during pregnancy, it is difficult for the mother to accept the objectivity of the child after birth. The psychic unity between mother and child gradually disappears as the child asserts its independence. As Dr. Silberpfennig puts it: "Unconciously they (the mothers) do not accept the fact that the child is no more a part of their own bodies, and utilize this strong attachment to solve their own problems, which they project onto the child. Forced into this close relationship, the child does not want to give it up." [31]

Physically and psychically, the pregnant woman experiences antithetic attitudes. The physical creation of new life opens up tremendous vistas of enlargement, which fact partially explains the satisfactions derived from the fact of pregnancy. At the same time there is a physical and psychical shrinking of the self. Physically, this is due to the dedication of the woman's body to something that is not herself. Psychically, this shrinking of the self arises from the fact that the mother gives but does not receive anything. This giving without receiving will continue after the child is born.[32]

Parturition and Personality

Pregnancy normally terminates in the delivery of the child. This process is naturally of consuming interest to the married couple, especially to the wife. In recent years, there has been considerable discussion of this subject, in such terms as "Natural Childbirth," "Physiologic Childbirth," or "Childbirth without Fear." There is good reason for the current popular interest in this matter. If this should become the generally accepted way of approaching the birth experience, it will not only promote health and safety but it may have effects on the personality of mother and child that will be nothing short of revolutionary.

Labor and childbearing involve pain. The dread of childbirth has been passed on from woman to woman for countless generations. The demand of modern woman for the alleviation of the pain of labor and childbirth has led to the development of many analgesics and anesthetics that have proved beneficial. At the same time, "no completely safe and satisfactory method of pain relief in obstretrics has been developed."[33] The problem is exceedingly complex owing to (a) the duration of labor; (b) the need for safety; (c) the importance of seeing that the drugs used have little effect on uterine contractions, and (d) the prevention of any placental transmission of damage to the fetus.

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[30] Helene Deutsch, *The Psychology of Women*, 2 vols. (New York: Grune and Stratton, 1945), II, 153-54.

[31] Judith Silberpfennig, "Mother Types Encountered in Child Guidance Clinics," *The American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, July 1941, XI, 473-84.

[32] Deutsch, *The Psychology of Women*, II, 159.

Safety and *timing* are the keys, therefore, to the intelligent use of pain-relieving agents. In addition, there are basic psychological considerations. As one authority puts it: "The proper psychological management of the patient throughout prenatal care and labor is an indispensable basic sedative. A woman who is carefree, unafraid, and possessed of complete confidence in her obstetrician and nurses, usually enjoys a relatively comfortable first stage or requires a minimum of medication."[34]

The most widely used pain-relieving drugs employed in obstetrical practice are a combination of scopolamine, to effect narcotic amnesia of everything happening in labor, and a sedative agent such as one of the barbiturates or morphine. This combination is popularly recognized as "twilight sleep." Of the anesthetics, nitrous oxide is extensively used for intermittent pain relief during labor, whereas ether is perhaps safest at the time of delivery. For certain purposes, intravenous anesthetics (for example, sodium pentothal) have their advantages. Of the regional anesthetics, the one most widely heralded in recent years has been the continuous caudal technique. By keeping the caudal space (the lowest extent of the bony spinal canal) continually supplied with anesthetic solution, "the patient experiences no pain in labor whatsoever and is conscious neither of uterine contractions nor of perineal distention. The continuous caudal technic provides both analgesia in the first and second stages and anesthesia for delivery."[35]

The English obstetrician Grantly Dick Read has been the pioneer in the development and advocacy of the "natural childbirth" method. Reduced to its simplest terms, his basic principle is that much of the pain associated with childbearing is a consequence of fear. Fear creates tension which has an inhibiting effect on the functioning of the organism. By the elimination of fear, childbirth can become a natural and exhilarating experience.[36] This method depends in final analysis upon the degree to which the woman can control the emotional factors accompanying the childbearing experience.

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[33] Eastman, *Williams Obstetrics*, p. 422.

[34] *Ibid.* Cf. also John Parks, "Emotional Reactions to Pregnancy," *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*, August 1951, LXII, 339-45.

[35] Eastman, *William Obstetrics*, p. 436.

During the prenatal period, the patient is familiarized with the physiological processes involved, and the doctor endeavors to win her complete confidence. Exercises in relaxation are given, as well as those aimed at controlling abdominal muscles and breathing. It is important that the nurse or the doctor be present throughout labor and delivery to reassure the patient concerning her cooperative efforts. Furthermore, the doctor assures the patient that analgesics or anesthetics will be administered if and when they become necessary. There is a popular misconception that no anesthetics whatever are used in connection with this method. Some women do go through the entire process without such aids, but with many women small quantities of anesthetics are used. The very fact that their use is reduced both in quantity and duration is of great benefit to the mother and to the child.[37]

Perhaps the first experiment with a panel discussion of anesthesia in childbirth aimed at college undergraduates was that held at Hood College in Frederick, Maryland in the spring of 1950. Dr. Robert A. Hingson and Dr. Louis Hellman of the Department of Obstetrics of The Johns Hopkins University led the discussion. The other members of the panel were three young mothers, each of whom had recently had a child, one by the twilight sleep method, one by the continuous caudal technic, and the third by the natural method. The doctors initiated the discussion by presenting material on the development of anesthetics and their use in contemporary obstetrical practice. Each mother then gave a personal account of the experiences associated with labor and delivery. The 500 students and members of the faculty in attendance were convinced that it was a valuable educational experience.[38]

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[36] Grantly Dick Read, *Childbirth without Fear* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1944), p. 73.

[37] H. Lloyd Miller, Francis E. Flannery, and Dorothy Bell, "Education for Childbirth in Private Practice," *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*, April 1952, LXIII, 792-99.

Personality and Parental Roles

Parents give hostages to fortune when they assume their new roles. The expectations clustered about parenthood are among the most powerful obligations in any society. These expectations differ from one pattern of culture to another and between subcultures within the larger pattern. Members of the middle and upper class expect different behavior of parents and children than do members of the lower class. These expectations reflect different ways of life and are reflected in the personalities of parents and children. We have concerned ourselves heretofore largely with the impact of the parent upon the malleable personality of the child. We may now consider the impact of the child upon the personality of the parent. Inasmuch as personality is a dynamic conception, the experiences of adult life continue to influence the personalities of the parents.[39]

The parental roles carry a high content of social approval. The concepts of motherhood and fatherhood call to mind groups of associations involving strong social approbation. Waller has aptly termed this cluster of emotions "the pathos of parenthood." In the sympathetic smile of the outside world for a father with his children, for example, there are "implicit the pathos of the mores, pity and love for the dependence of the child, and a sigh for one's lost youth, approval of the father, a touch of envy for one who has the privilege of being a parent." [40] The father and mother have assumed roles that are satisfying to their deepest biological and culturally-induced drives. This social approval has a strong effect upon the personality.

In human beings, the physiological bases for activity are potentialities that come to full fruition only in terms of a particular social and cultural setting. The close association of infant and mother is thus the essential condition for the mobilization of the sentiment of mother love. "It is relatively easy," says Plant, "to 'love' those who need us, who depend upon us."[41] The need and dependence of the newborn child are so absolute that it can be readily understood why parents come quickly to love it. This element of dependence combines with the realization of biological immortality to produce a unique devotion in the parents. The development of this devotion in our society tends to occur more rapidly in the mother than in the father. Both in terms of prenatal and early natal experience, the mother is in much closer physical contact with the child than the father is. The child of both sexes is thus ordinarily closer emotionally to the mother than to the father.[42]

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[38] Cf. "Hood Girls Hear of Childbirth Anesthesia," *New York Herald Tribune*, April 2, 1950.

[39] Cf. Merrill, *Courtship and Marriage*, chap. 12, "Parents and Children."

[40] Willard Waller, *The Family*, rev. Reuben Hill (New York: The Dryden Press, 1951), pp. 387-88.

[41] James S. Plant, *Personality and the Cultural Pattern* (New York: The Commonwealth Fund, 1937), p. 175.

The average week-old infant is anything but an object of beauty when viewed by objective canons. In the eyes of the parents, however, he possesses a kind of beauty that is not of this world. The nonparticipants in this strange form of behavior look on with a kind of amused tolerance. Since the great majority of them have also, in their time, participated in similar behavior, they tend to define the parental conduct in terms of sympathetic appreciation. The individual needs the approval of other persons. One of the surest methods to gain this approval is to become the father or mother of a child. In the eyes of other persons as well as that of the "generalized other" of the culture, parenthood enhances the image of the self.

The role of parent carries with it other rewards and satisfactions. Children are not merely passive members of the parent-child relationship. Their very presence introduces complications into the hitherto adult pattern of husband and wife. The interests of the spouses expand as children open up new vistas and raise new problems. Parents become concerned with such matters as schools, playrooms, insurance, community influences, recreational facilities, and similar matters which up to this time have not seemed especially important. Many young couples who have enjoyed the freedom and convenience of life in the metropolitan center begin to think of moving to a suburb, where the schools are (presumably) better, where the child can have more room to play, and where the neighborhood environment is more suitable to the maturing infant.[43]

The parent may also derive emotional satisfaction from association with his children and, eventually, with his children's children. The individual who has not received the satisfactions from life which he expected may transfer his ambitions to his children. He may identify himself with their success and this ego-involvement[44] may increase his own satisfactions. In this sense, the child may give the parent an opportunity to relive his own life. If the child is successful, the parent may salvage some of the frustrated hopes of his own career. The intelligent but uneducated father may thus project his own hopes for a professional career upon his son.

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[42] Robert F. Winch, "Further Data and Observations on the Oedipus Hypothesis: the Consequence of an Inadequate Hypothesis," *American Sociological Review*, December 1951, XVI, 784-95.

[43] These paragraphs are adapted from the penetrating analysis of James H. S. Bossard, *The Sociology of Child Development* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1948), chap. 7, "What the Child Gives the Parents."

The parental role also provides a sense of power arising from the control of human life. This feeling is not always conscious, but the sense of parental omnipotence in the early years of the child's life may be strongly flattering to the ego. This feeling does not necessarily mean domination, but often reflects the assistance of a stronger to a weaker person who is, furthermore, both physically and socially made in the image of the parent. This parental power is not always used rightly or sympathetically, but there is no question of its existence. For better or worse, its effects are felt in the personality of the parent as well as that of the child. The latter may carry this pattern of authority from his family of orientation over into his family of procreation.[45] The possibilities for the use or abuse of this position are tremendous. The parent is dealing with the plastic stuff of human personality. Out of these relationships of subordination and superordination, the personality of the parent does not go unchanged.[46]

The parental role gives the individual a sense of the meaning of life as no other single role can do. The parents are able to observe at first hand the development of human life, from the moment of conception, through birth, infancy, childhood, adolescence, and often into adulthood and parenthood in turn. No amount of theoretical knowledge can possibly equal this understanding. The parent gains a concrete realization of the continuity of life. "It is at such moments," remarks Bossard, "when a parent has given his all to the insatiable demands of his child, that there comes the true meaning of one's relation to life: that each generation is but a trustee of life, for all its values and all its possessions."[47]

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[44] Muzafer Sherif and Hadley Cantril, *The Psychology of Ego-Involvements* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1947).

[45] Hazel Ingersoll, "A Study of the Transmission of Authority Patterns in the Family," *Genetic Psychology Monographs*, 1948, XXXVIII, 225-303.

[46] Cf. D. D. Mueller, "Paternal Domination: Its Influences on Child Guidance Results," *Smith College Studies in Social Work*, 1945, XV, 184-215.

Parenthood also brings a number of frustrations. Frustration has been defined as "an interference with the occurrence of an instigated goal-response at its proper time in the behavior sequence."[48] Many phases of the personality process tend to bring about frustration in this sense. Parenthood is no exception. The coming of the child, for example, is certain to bring about a reorientation in the affectional roles of the couple. These roles, as we have repeatedly noted, are important in contemporary marriage. Role changes after the birth of the child can deepen the emotional bonds between husband and wife. These changes can also widen the gap if the previous relationships have been unsatisfactory. One parent may withdraw affection from the spouse and concentrate it upon the child, whose dependence makes it an ideal love object.[49]

Parenthood also brings changes in habit. Freedom of movement will be restricted, for the demands of the helpless infant require constant attention. The baby's schedule of routinized activities has a way of making the wishes of the parents seem of secondary importance. Excessive feelings of responsibility may lead to abnormal parental anxieties as to whether or not they are doing the right thing by the helpless infant. When authorities on child care and development disagree, it is small wonder that parents are bewildered.[50]

The identification of the parent with the child may lead to other forms of frustration. The child may not measure up to the expectations so fondly held by the parent. The parent may react to this blasting of his own hopes by conscious or unconscious aggression against the child. The parent may fail to understand that the failure of the child may result from the impossible nature of the goals set by the mother or father. The parent who is mature will meet this situation philosophically, whereas the immature parent will project his own frustrations upon the child. Fathers who wish their sons to follow in their professions, regardless of the interests or abilities of the sons, are examples of this type of behavior. The extreme ego-involvement of the father in the career of his son may render the former even more intolerant of the failure of his child to measure up to expectations.[51]

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[47] Bossard, *The Sociology of Child Development*, p. 156.

[48] John Dollard, *et al.*, *Frustration and Aggression* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1939), p. 7.

[49] David M. Levy, *Maternal Overprotection* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943).

[50] Cf. Celia Stendler, "Sixty Years of Child Training Practices," *Journal of Pediatrics*, July 1950, XXXVI, 122-34.

This parent-child identification may lead to still other difficulties. The parent may, consciously or unconsciously, use the child to fill some deep emotional need. The wife who is frustrated in her own marital relationship may subconsciously attempt to bind her son to her with cords of silver. These cords, as Strecker points out, are extremely strong and may take a variety of forms. The mother may appear to be gentle and undemanding but in reality may rule the family (and especially her son) with a rule of iron. The mother who has allegedly sacrificed her health to her family may wish to keep one or more of her children with her forever. Parental dominance may take a variety of forms, when the emotional needs of the parent are too closely incorporated in the child.[52]

These are some of the ways in which parenthood affects the personalities of the parents and, reciprocally, the personalities of the children.[53] If parents continue to influence their children in terms of what they (the parents) are as persons, we would appear to be in a vicious circle. Parents thus presumably condition children, who in turn will become parents and pass on to their own children the maladjustments which they have experienced. The circle must be broken somewhere.

One answer seems to lie in education leading to an understanding of the dynamics of personality. If parents can be made to see the ways in which their own personalities affect the child, such knowledge can presumably reinforce the desirable influences and minimize the undesirable ones. Mature parenthood must always imply that the child is an end in himself and not a means to the end of the parent. What Dr. Deutsch says about motherhood can with equal force be applied to parenthood in general. "A mother must not strive to achieve any other goals through her child but those of his existence, otherwise she runs the risk of failing in her purpose and of being cheated of the experience of motherhood."[54] As a statement of the ideal of parenthood, this is highly suggestive. True motherhood and fatherhood come only to those who recognize that the child's developing personality is the only acceptable goal of parenthood.

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[51] Bossard, *The Sociology of Child Development,* chap. 15, "Parents with Problem Attitudes."

[52] Edward A. Strecker, "Psychiatry Speaks to Democracy," *Mental Hygiene,* October 1945, XXIX, 591-605, quoted by James H. S. Bossard, *op. cit.,* p. 347.

[53] Cf. M. E. Bonney, "Parents as the Makers of Social Deviates," *Social Forces,* October 1941, XX, 77-87.

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[54] Deutsch, *The Psychology of Women*, II, 326.

PART VI

THE DYNAMICS OF THE FAMILY

22

PERSONAL CONFLICTS AND FAMILY TENSIONS

FAMILY CONFLICT is not something new under the sun. Human nature is such that two persons cannot remain in close relationship without a certain amount of conflict. In the historical family, the clashing temperaments of husbands and wives, the age-old problem of the in-laws, and the inevitable personality differences between two people have all contributed to the uneasiness of family life. After a glance at the divorce statistics, many persons may lapse into a nostalgic reverie in which they attribute ideal characteristics to the family of the early 1900's, of the years after the Civil War, the pioneer family in the Western states, or the Colonial family—in fact, to the American family of every day but our own. Any such idyllic picture of a supremely adjusted and amicable family does considerable violence both to the facts of human nature and to the former state of the family. Human nature in one sense is in constant flux and has changed considerably in recent decades. But human nature also exhibits certain constants which endure generation after generation. Human nature in the preindustrial age was not all sweetness and light. Husbands, wives, children, grandparents, and in-laws have disagreed for as long as we have written records. Family conflict has been the result of these squabbles.

The Nature of Family Conflict

Why has the problem of family conflict recently become so acute? Why has the public suddenly become conscious of conflicts which threaten (and often accomplish) the disorganization of hundreds of thousands of individual families so that the divorce court seems the only way out? A partial answer to this complex problem arises from the nature of the conflicts themselves and the attitude of the family toward them. In the comparatively stable world of the early family, conflict largely revolved around differences in personality, temperament, and personal behavior patterns. Husbands were brutal and overbearing, wives were shrewish and nagging, children were ungrateful and insubordinate—these and other difficulties were an accompaniment of family life in general, even though many individual families lived in tranquillity and suffered few of the slings and arrows of such outrageous fortune.

Furthermore, the organization of the traditional family was such that considerable conflict could be taken in its collective stride. Definite social mechanisms were evolved in folk wisdom to deal with a violent husband, a difficult wife, and recalcitrant children. In short, family conflicts were largely *individual* in character and took place in an environment heavily controlled by custom. Adjustment on a minimum level was expected, and the disruption of the family, except by death, was rare.[1]

Not so the contemporary family. Here the differences are cultural and social as well as individual in character. The parties are still individual men and women, but the differences of character and temperament have been augmented by disparities in cultural background and social standards. The latter operate through the personalities of husband and wife, but the differences are more complicated to adjust. Because of this enhanced complexity, the devices utilized in a former day to resolve family conflicts are no longer adequate.

Many of these traditional patterns still operate in the rural areas where life is simpler, the family retains many institutional functions, and differences in background are ordinarily not so great. The factors that break down the institutional structure of the family also tend to increase the range of conflict within it and weaken the mechanisms that formerly resolved the conflict. The growing social heterogeneity and the decreasing institutional power of the family have increased internal conflict from an annoyance to a threat to the family's integrity.[2]

Family conflict is usually considered in terms of differences between husband and wife which so weaken the ties that the couple may seek dissolution in divorce. Conflict takes place also between parents and children, but the results are not so spectacular. Husbands and wives locked in irreconcilable conflict often take their troubles to the courts. Conflict between parents and children may be just as bitter, but it seldom has such a tangible outcome. Parents do not divorce their children (although they may occasionally disown them), and children do not ordinarily air their parental difficulties in court. The social machinery is such that conflict on the husband-wife level is a matter of public knowledge through the divorce statistics. We shall therefore deal largely with marital conflicts, not because others do not exist but because we have no direct ways of measuring them.

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[1] Ernest W. Burgess and Harvey J. Locke, *The Family* (New York: American Book Company, 1945), pp. 559-60.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 559-60.

Family conflict may be considered in two general senses, both of which have been anticipated in our discussion. *Personal* conflicts arise primarily out of the personality differences of husband and wife. *Social* conflicts arise beyond the inner relationship and impinge upon the family group from without. Because of the social nature of personality, these two forms are not mutually exclusive. Many of the conflicting elements in the personal behavior patterns of husband and wife are clearly the result of social and cultural influences. The values that provoke many phases of conflict are produced by the action of social forces outside the individual. At the same time, the unemployment of the husband or the employment of the wife must be interpreted through the temperament and personality of the individuals. The distinction is largely one of exposition, although the ideal types may be distinguished. The family is a relationship comprising two or more persons with different personalities, exposed to a variety of influences from the larger group. We must bear in mind the essential unity of the individual, family, and society.

The Nature of Personal Conflict

"Every individual," says Harriet R. Mowrer, "enters marriage with certain potentialities and impediments to adjustment. These 'assets' and 'liabilities' consist in general of the ideas of the person as to what constitutes marriage, of habit complexes, and of dominant trends in personality." [3] When these conceptions, habits, and personality traits differ too widely, serious conflict may be expected. Marriages are not made in heaven, and some difference inevitably exists between any two persons. Hence a minimum of conflict is the accompaniment of even the happiest family relationships. In this chapter, we shall consider some of the principal differences in personality which spell conflict in marriage. In the next chapter we shall consider the elements of conflict which clearly impinge from without.

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[3] Harriet R. Mowrer, *Personality Adjustment and Domestic Discord* (New York: American Book Company, 1935), p. 35.

The formation of personality in the family has been considered above. The prospective husband and wife enter marriage as comparatively mature individuals, with their personalities already largely formed. For better or worse, the bride and groom at marriage are essentially the same persons they will remain the rest of their lives. This situation does not bar education, growth, tolerance, affection, and understanding in one or both of the partners as life goes on and experience takes its toll. But the basic foundation of the personality —the genic and psychogenic traits plus their early conditioning within the parental family—has already been laid. The girl who marries a man in the fond hope of reforming him is usually doomed to disappointment. Temperamental traits, habits of long standing, roles developed in the early family relationship, and the psychological impact of the parental family cannot be substantially modified except by a rigorous reconditioning.

"It is apparent," continues Harriet R. Mowrer, ". . . that the genesis of domestic discord is to be found in those experiences of the individual which have resulted in the fixity of habits and attitudes and in the development of personality trends which halt or impede accommodation. Thus an understanding of the development of personality is essential to the explanation of domestic discord." [4] Men and women act after marriage in very much the same way as prior thereto. Girls who evaded responsibility in childhood and adolescence will usually evade the added responsibilities of the family. Men who have had their own way all their lives will not suddenly become paragons of sweet reasonableness after exchanging marriage vows. People who have solved their difficulties since childhood by flying into rages or retiring into fretful sulks will not overnight accept the give-and-take of marriage. Girls with chronic neurotic illness, or men who have "solved" their problems by getting drunk will not completely modify their personalities in the intimacy of marriage. All this does not imply that adjustment does not take place after marriage. Some degree of adaptation is indispensable to any family relationship, and the majority of husbands and wives learn it. But the range of this adjustment is limited by the facts of earlier personal development.[5]

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[4] *Ibid.*, p. 36.

Every marriage is composed of two individuals with different life organizations. Every marriage since the world began has similarly involved two different personalities. The important factor for us is the degree of difference between persons in the heterogeneous society of present-day America. The traditional family, in a stable and sacred society, produced men and women who were different in many respects, but the extent of those differences was probably considerably less than in our own day. The more complex, mobile, and heterogeneous the society, the greater the diversity of personality patterns to be found therein. Other things being equal, these divergent personalities will have greater difficulty adjusting to marriage than will those with similar backgrounds.

Individual Choice and Personal Conflict

In traditional societies, individualism in marital choice is minimized and romance as a prerequisite to marriage is not in the mores. When the parental family chooses a husband or wife, its members are acting primarily on the basis of similarity of background, interest, values, and status. The new member is not chosen primarily because of his or her *individual* traits but because of their conformity to a previously determined pattern. The new addition to the family is an acceptable example of a *type*, rather than one whose desirability is based largely upon a unique set of personal characteristics. In a comparatively stable society, the son and daughter-in-law often live in close proximity to the parents. The latter are concerned that the new daughter conform to certain general conditions such as fertility, skill in housekeeping, and a similarity of social background. These traits are all highly desirable in themselves, but they characterize a class rather than an individual.

In our society, individualism in marital choice is stressed to the increasing exclusion of other elements. Romantic love assumes individual choice of the marriage partner, based upon certain allegedly unique characteristics rather than those of a group or class. Personal factors and personal differences are stressed in a society whose heterogeneity is already greater than any other. Boys and girls learn that there is one preordained mate for them, with a unique combination of traits that will make them supremely happy. Marriage is founded and continues largely upon a concordance of personal characteristics between husband and wife, a tenuous basis for a permanent relationship. With many of the institutional aspects of the family modified or abandoned, the personal relationships become proportionately more important and personal conflict takes on greater significance. The contemporary family has lost many of the functions that maintained its integrity. The family operates in a society tending to maximize the importance of personal conflicts. This dual process tends to weaken the family.

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[5] For a further discussion of this situation, see Harriet R. Mowrer, "Discords in Marriage," *Family, Marriage, and Parenthood*, eds. Howard Becker and Reuben Hill (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1948), chap. 12.

The various forces making for individualism in our society combine to make the person, in or out of marriage, extremely conscious of his ego. The ego has both conscious and unconscious elements, and the spouse may not be consciously aware of the existence or intensity of his ego-feelings. Our culture strongly emphasizes the development of the ego, whereby the person regards himself as a complete entity, with certain inalienable rights and privileges, and responsible to no one. This attitude makes marital adjustment more difficult. By its very nature, marriage calls for compromise, which is difficult for persons with strongly developed egos. Many spouses are continually clashing on a variety of matters, some of them very trivial. The ego becomes involved in these inconsequential matters, however, and the spouses continue to hold their positions because of a sense of "honor" (that is, ego-involvement).[6]

The ego-gratification of both parties is thus important in marital adjustment. When this gratification is withheld or interrupted, the resulting frustration may erupt in the form of aggression directed toward the spouse. In the traditional family pattern, the possibility of conflicting ego-feelings was minimized by the nature of the patriarchal expectations. The husband was the only member of the family who was expected to have a strong ego, and the role of the wife was to minister thereto. In the present social context, however, the ego-development of both sexes is expected to be equally strong, a situation that makes for greater possibilities of conflict in marriage. In many instances, the spouses compete for the same goals, and the areas of ego-conflict are correspondingly increased. The ego is then a potentially divisive force in the marital relationship.[7]

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[6] See Muzafer Sherif and Hadley Cantril, *The Psychology of Ego-Involvements* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1947).

Symbolic Aspects of Family Conflict

The family is the focal point for many of the fears, frustrations, and resentments of a complex and frustrating society. The members of the family reflect in their personalities many of these tensions and conflicts. "Many of the minor tensions in family life," remarks Ernest R. Mowrer, "grow out of the fact that the members of the family become the conventional scapegoats for the hatreds and animosities generated in the communal life of the individual, which, in the interest of maintaining his prestige, his job, and the accomplishments of his goal, he has had to hold in check. The family circle," he concludes, "becomes the convenient locale within which these emotions can with some safety find expression, even at the expense of producing tensions in family relations." [8] By serving as the repository for the tensions of the frustrated husband and wife, the family thereby weakens its own solidarity. The marital tie can resist many corrosive expressions of ill-temper, but their cumulative effect may eventually mean disaster to the individual family.

The related concepts of "tension" and "conflict" have both been used to explain family difficulties. Strictly speaking, the distinction between the two is based upon whether the difference comes into the open and whether it is there solved. Burgess and Locke speak of family *conflict* as "a fight of any sort, ranging from a slight difference of opinion to uncompromising warfare," whereas family tension is "an unsolved conflict . . . either openly expressed, or repressed thereby accumulating added emotional force. Tensions," they continue, "are the result of conflict situations in which certain basic frustrations are not resolved." [9]

There is no question of the validity of this distinction. In the present context, however, the two words will be used interchangeably to denote friction, disagreement, or dissimilarity of definition within the family. Whether open or covert, resolved or unresolved, the underlying forces threatening the stability of the family are essentially similar. Some grow out of the personalities of the marital partners; others reflect more directly the conflicts of the outside world.

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[7] Willard Waller, *The Family*, rev. Reuben Hill (New York: The Dryden Press, 1951), pp. 278-81.

[8] Ernest R. Mowrer, "War and Family Solidarity and Stability," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, September 1943, CCXXIX, 104.

[9] Burgess and Locke, *The Family*, p. 560.

Family conflicts, whether personal or social, often contain more than meets the eye. As Harriet R. Mowrer points out, many conflicts are symbolic of other family differences which remain below the surface. These difficulties may be consciously hidden or unconsciously repressed because they violate the mores. Tensions generated by different conceptions of sex may be expressed in conflicts over money. Jealousy of the wife may be the overt expression of the husband's sense of inadequacy because of his indifferent business success. Sustained wifely hostility toward a well-meaning and unsuspecting husband may reflect an unconscious adoration of her father, whereby she compares her husband unfavorably with her image of her father. Drunkenness and neurotic illness are often expressions of hidden conflicts whose exact nature is as obscure to the sufferers as to their unhappy spouses. Many such conflicts rise from the murky depths of the unconscious to plague the family in which one or both of the parties may be suffering from difficulties of whose existence they are not aware.[10]

Temperament and Family Conflict

Temperament is almost as difficult to define as to explain, but for present purposes it may be considered as the combination of personal characteristics that determines individual reaction to an emotional situation. Temperamental patterns seem to be largely inborn and establish both the rapidity with which the individual will react emotionally to different situations and the general direction this reaction will take. People respond differently to the same situation, some being easily angered over trifles and others slow to anger. Some people are "naturally" shy and others are jolly and gregarious.

The general emotional patterns were traditionally known by their classical titles as sanguine, choleric, melancholy, and phlegmatic. Recent nomenclature speaks of people as introvert and extrovert, denoting whether their emotions drive them inward upon themselves or outward toward other persons. Although each individual may fluctuate from expansiveness to depression, joy to gloom, the temperamental equipment insures a fairly constant mean of behavior. People who are temperamentally shy and melancholy react with some consistency to a varied set of situations, whereas those temperamentally different react accordingly.

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[10] Harriet R. Mowrer, *Personality Adjustment and Domestic Discord*, pp. 219-20.

Temperamental differences, however defined, play an obvious part in marital conflict. Gregarious husbands who enjoy a constant round of parties may have difficulty in adjusting to wives who prefer a quiet evening at home with a good book. Wives who are slow to anger cannot understand why their husbands fly into a rage at trifling matters. In Locke's study of marital adjustment, he found that the choleric person (other things being equal) tended to make an unsatisfactory adjustment in marriage. The speed with which a person gets over anger was found to be correlated with marital adjustment and maladjustment. "Not only may anger itself create marital difficulties," concludes Locke, "but in so far as anger is associated with any marital difficulty, slowness in getting over it constitutes an obstacle in bringing about the solution of the problem, or in achieving reconciliation." [11]

Such family difficulties are conflicts on the most personal level, since they are derived most directly from differences in personality. Temperamental differences produce incompatibility on personal grounds, comparatively uncorrupted by social conditioning by the larger group. Individual temperaments are apparently relatively impervious to cultural modifications. Temperamental conflicts have been part of the ancient problem of the family, which for thousands of years has been the secret battlefield of individual armies clashing by night.

Temperamental differences in marital conflict are psychological as well as sociological problems. Professor Lewis M. Terman has suggested that such differences are fundamental to happiness or conflict in marriage. Couples patently unhappy have such temperamental qualities as "to be touchy and grouchy; to lose their tempers easily; to fight to get their own way; to be critical of others; to be careless of others' feelings; to chafe under discipline or to rebel against orders; to show any dislike that they may happen to feel; to be easily affected by praise or blame; to lack self-confidence . . . to be often in a state of excitement; and to alternate between happiness and sadness without apparent cause."[12] These and similar temperamental traits in one of the marital partners make for conflict, unless the other is unusually patient.

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[11] Harvey J. Locke, *Predicting Adjustment in Marriage* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1951), p. 204.

This does not mean that persons of the *same* temperament necessarily make an ideal adjustment and that their family life is devoid of conflict. Quite the contrary, in many cases. Husbands and wives who are both temperamentally aggressive may quarrel steadily over any of the small matters of potential disagreement that constantly arise. Their family life is a series of emotional crises, no one of which is serious, but whose cumulative effect may disorganize the family. Husbands and wives who are both extremely sanguine and optimistic about the state of the world and their own position therein may find themselves in the position of a Mr. Micawber, continually undone by his own optimism. Couples predisposed to any form of excessive emotional behavior may stimulate each other as unfortunately as those with different temperamental backgrounds.

The ideal marital relationship is one in which two different temperaments *complement* each other. Each partner brings certain qualities which the other lacks and which together make the couple stronger before the world. Such fortunate combinations exemplify the axiom that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Husbands inclined to be temperamentally introverted may be fortunate in wives who like people and direct the emotional drives of the family from exclusive preoccupation with individual concerns. Similarly, a modicum of apprehension may be a useful antidote to a mate inclined to be uncritically sanguine. The very nature of marriage represents unity in diversity, whereby two persons of the opposite sex unite for the ultimate mysterious purposes of life itself.

This tendency toward unity in diversity is illustrated by a study of 231 couples, based upon the psychology typology of C. G. Jung.[13] The scheme advanced by Jung embraces three general types, each consisting of two opposites, making six types in all. (a) The first pair comprises the familiar introverted and extroverted set of opposites, in terms of which the individual is emotionally drawn inward upon himself or outward toward other persons. (b) The second pair of opposites refers to the general mode of perception; that is, whether the individual perceives primarily through the faculties of sensation or those of intuition. (c) The third pair of opposites refers to the method of forming judgments and distinguishes between the rational process of thinking and the essentially non-rational process of valuing (feeling-function).[14]

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[12] Lewis M. Terman, *et al.*, *Psychological Factors in Marital Happiness* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1938), p. 369.

[13] C. G. Jung, *Psychological Types* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc., 1928).

In the study in question, the evidence pointed strongly to the fact that persons are attracted by *complementary* temperamental qualities, rather than by qualities similar to their own. The individual enters marriage with certain unconscious needs which he is attempting to fulfill. These needs are many and varied. Some of them are innate and fall clearly within the category of the temperamental. Others are acquired and reflect the social conditioning of the individual.[15] In terms of Jung's personality types, the husband who is moderately introverted seems to be attracted to the wife who is moderately extroverted; the wife who perceives primarily through sensation appears to be attracted to a spouse who is more strongly intuitive. In these and other respects the happily-mated couples seem to be those whose temperamental qualities complement, rather than parallel, each other. By the same token, those marriages in which the temperamental qualities of the spouses fail to complement each other may carry the seeds of possible marital conflict.

Behavior Patterns and Family Conflict

Whereas temperament is apparently largely genic in character, behavior patterns are acquired after birth. Conflicts arising from divergent behavior patterns are extremely personal, but they are one step removed from the biological inheritance. The husband may have learned the irritating habits during the years of maturation in his own family. He may have acquired them from his playmates, his friends, or his business acquaintances. Wherever and however acquired, these habits are part of his personality by the time he is married. These patterns can be modified by persistent and conscious effort, but generally they cling tenaciously to him through life. The temperamental inheritance of the individual appears to be essentially fixed. His behavior patterns are more malleable, but even they cannot lightly be discarded.

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[14] Horace Gray, "Psychological Types in Married People," *Journal of Social Psychology*, May 1949, XXIX, 189-200.

[15] Cf. Robert F. Winch, *The Modern Family* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1952), pp. 403 ff.

Behavior patterns comprise a wide range of responses learned by the individual during his development to maturity. They vary from such irritating but harmless idiosyncrasies as awkward table manners and an ignorance of the minor social graces to behavior that may be of more importance to family adjustment. The wife whose husband has learned to drink his coffee from the saucer may be embarrassed in the company of those to whom such behavior is not *de rigueur*. She will not, however, normally file suit for divorce on this ground. When the behavior patterns involve matters of elementary politeness, discipline of the children, or habitual over-indulgence in alcohol, the resulting situation may be the basis for more deep-seated conflicts.

Behavior patterns involving family authority are among those that give rise to personal conflicts. We have considered these patterns in chapter 10 and need not recapitulate our discussion here. Authority patterns originate in the family of orientation, wherein the child observes the configuration between his own parents and unconsciously incorporates the appropriate role expectations into his own personality. The boy who grows up in a mother-dominated family may thus acquire a set of expectations whereby he is ready to play the role of submissive husband, as his father did before him. The possibilities for conflict are great in marriages to which the spouses bring conflicting roles, such as those of authoritarian husband and dominant wife. Many persons are able to modify these potentially conflicting authority patterns and work out a satisfactory marital adjustment. Other persons, however, are unable to make such an adjustment in the marital relationship and continue to act out the mutually incompatible roles which they acquired in the parental family. Fundamental and long-continued marital conflict may result.[16]

Divergent behavior patterns also reflect the heterogeneity of our society. During much of the history of the family, individuals could not expect complete conformity of behavior patterns from their spouses, but they could expect certain basic cultural uniformities. In a comparatively sacred society, members of the same class could expect many similarities in behavior. This situation is rare in our own society, which combines ethnic, religious, and cultural heterogeneity with a high degree of vertical and horizontal mobility. As a result of these social dynamics, the girl or boy stands a greater chance of encountering differing behavior patterns in a mate than ever before. Husbands and wives brought up with different behavior patterns in many of the fundamental concerns of life will have difficulty adjusting their behavior. Consistent failure to do so may result in conflict.

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[16] Hazel L. Ingersoll, "A Study of the Transmission of Authority Patterns in the Family," *Genetic Psychology Monographs*, 1948, XXXVIII, 256-58.

Conflicts on this level may also symbolize those of a more deep-seated character. Wives may be lashed into bitter anger by the table manners of their husbands when the tension actually arises from incompatibility of temperament, conflict on the sexual level, or an infantile role in the husband's own family background. As Harriet R. Mowrer points out, the relationships between the open and hidden bases of family conflict are so various that it is often difficult to discover their true genesis. Overt actions are often the only indications of the nature of the conflict, and they are not always reliable. Many comparatively superficial indications are popularly considered the basic reasons for marital conflict. The lack of insight into the underlying elements may exacerbate the conflict.[17]

Frustrated Roles and Family Conflict

Social roles are an important factor in marital adjustment. They are an equally important factor in marital conflict. Marital roles are patterns of expectations which the individual brings to marriage. These roles may be frustrated when he is unable to realize his self-other pattern of expectations.[18] The individual may find that he is unable to play his own role in marriage as he has conceived it. He may also find that he does not receive the attention from his wife which he has been taught to expect in his own parental family.

Some of these expectations may be impossible of attainment by their very nature, as in the case of romantic love. They may also be difficult to reach because they conflict with the reciprocal expectations of the wife, who has learned an entirely different set of marital patterns. The individual whose role expectations have been frustrated in marriage often vents his aggression upon the most convenient object in his environment, which is usually his spouse.[19] He may also divert his emotions into other channels, such as daydreaming, fantasy, or going to the movies. Many broken marriages are the direct or indirect result of the continued frustration of marital roles.

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[17] Harriet R. Mowrer, *Personality Adjustment and Domestic Discord*, pp. 219-20.

[18] Cf. Robert S. Ort, "A Study of Role Conflicts as Related to Happiness in Marriage," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, October 1950, XLV, 691-99.

Marital roles are social products and are part of the culture pattern. They are nonmaterial elements and tend to change more slowly than the more tangible aspects of behavior. These group expectations assume a sacred or ideal character, wherein the relationship takes on a rigid and immutable quality. The actual behavior, however, is carried on by very human persons, whose conduct is often anything but integrated, ideal, and consistent. This disparity between the ideal and the actuality accounts for much of the frustration in marriage, as the spouses are unable to conduct themselves in the roles of "good" husbands and "good" wives, as those concepts are ideally present in the culture.[20]

A further cause of the frustration of marital roles is the confusion in their social definition. In many cases, the spouses are never completely sure whether they are performing their roles as they are expected to by society in general and their spouses in particular. This lack of clarity in role definition is obviously not the fault of the participants, but it nevertheless may confuse and frustrate their marital relationships. In this connection, Cottrell suggests that "The degree of adjustment to roles which a society assigns to its age-sex categories varies directly with the clarity with which such roles are defined." [21] Many of the situations in modern marriage have no clear definitions in the mores, and the husband and wife are forced to improvise. Other situations were defined in an earlier day under different circumstances, and hence are irrelevant to the new situation. Roles that evolved when the family was largely an agrarian institution may not fit the exigencies of an urban, industrial society.

The chances of frustration in marital behavior seem to be greater for the wife than for the husband. The role behavior of the husband has changed less than that of the wife, and the functions he is expected to perform are still centered about the role of provider. The wife, however, has many possible choices, and she is often uncertain of which role she is expected to play or, indeed, which role she *wants* to play. She is often in doubt as to whether she is expected to play: (a) the wife-and-mother role as traditionally defined; (b) the companion-role, in which she is a decorative and romantic companion for the leisure hours of her husband; or (c) the partner-role, in which she is gainfully employed outside the home and takes her place beside her husband as an equal partner.[22]

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[19] See John Dollard, *et al.*, *Frustration and Aggression* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1939).

[20] The frustration in marital roles is treated at length in Francis E. Merrill, *Courtship and Marriage* (New York: The Dryden Press, 1949), chap. XV, "Frustrated Roles."

[21] Leonard S. Cottrell, Jr., "The Adjustment of the Individual to his Age and Sex Roles," *American Sociological Review*, October 1942, VII, 618.

These roles are not clearly defined, either in the general culture or in individual expectations, and hence there is considerable confusion. In addition, the wife may feel that she is forced to choose between conflicting roles. The choice itself may be more difficult than all the hard physical toil of the pioneer wife. "There is reason to think," says Kirkpatrick apropos of this situation, "that human beings can stand almost any situation which is inevitable, unambiguous, and clearly defined." [23] The roles of the modern wife are marked by none of these characteristics.[24]

Frustration may also arise when the wife is dissatisfied with the traditional roles which she is expected to play. This reaction is especially apparent with the educated woman who has spent many years in preparation for a career, for which she is well suited both in terms of temperament and natural ability. When she is barely started on this career, she marries and is promptly relegated to the role of unskilled drudge and unpaid domestic. The majority of wives, whatever their training or inclination, are apparently *consciously* satisfied with this role, although they may have reservations on the subconscious level. For some wives, however, any such reconciliation is impossible. As Kirkpatrick points out, "Many a capable woman . . . has gone neurotic living her years as a housekeeper in envy of the woman who is a marriage partner." [25]

Each person thus brings a different pattern of roles to marriage. The interaction of these roles and the reciprocal expectations that go with them make marriage a complex social relationship. In this variety of expectations, the man will be "attempting to fulfill his conception of the role of male, of husband, of father, and also the roles that his wife holds up for his emulation, while she in turn will be engaged in attempting to play all the roles that she cherishes and those that her husband is trying to impose upon her." [26] These roles are not matters for rational discussion. They are part and parcel of the personalities of the spouses, inculcated early in life and assuming strong normative qualities thereafter. Many of the conflicts in marriage reflect differing conceptions of these marital roles. When each spouse is certain that he is right on these matters, tolerance becomes increasingly difficult.[27]

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[22] Clifford Kirkpatrick, "The Measurement of Ethical Inconsistency in Marriage," *International Journal of Ethics*, July 1936, XLVI, 444-60.

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 447.

[24] Cf. also Arnold M. Rose, "The Adequacy of Women's Expectations for Adult Roles," *Social Forces*, October 1951, XXX, 69-77.

[25] Clifford Kirkpatrick, *op. cit.*, p. 447.

Personal Values and Family Conflict

The life organization of every person is based upon certain values, standards of behavior, or modes of conduct which he considers very important and tries to maintain. These values involve such matters as religious faith, sexual ethics, the importance of children, economic and political justice, feelings toward one's life work, and the like. They are important to the success of a marriage, for two persons whose values conflict will find adjustment in marriage difficult. Two people with similar configurations of personal values can surmount many difficulties that would otherwise tear the marriage relationship asunder. Husbands and wives with reconcilable values may make a viable marriage even though they differ in temperament, behavior patterns, and conception of their marital roles. Many families with conflicting values may stay together because of religious, financial, or prudential factors. The essential harmony of the family unit is lacking in such instances.

Family values do not exist in disembodied form. Abstract ideals do not cause family conflicts, any more than behavior patterns, family roles, or other abstractions established for the purpose of analysis. Values are retained by flesh-and-blood people, and it is this personal form that conflicts take. At the same time, the social character of the value must not be overlooked. Values are held by individual persons and play an important role in their life organizations. These values are not created out of whole cloth by the individual. All the social values—in religion, property, family, government, occupation, and the rest—are the products of society. Each person acquires the values of the particular groups that influence him during his formative years. Social values take different expressions from individual to individual, since no two persons are exposed to them in exactly the same form. Values are social in genesis but take on life through the person.[28]

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[26] Lawrence K. Frank, "Opportunities in a Program of Education for Marriage and Family Life," *Mental Hygiene*, October 1940, XXIV, 590-91.

[27] Alver H. Jacobson, "Conflict of Attitudes Toward the Roles of the Husband and Wife in Marriage," *American Sociological Review*, April 1952, XVII, 146-50.

Personal values grow out of the definition of the situation.[29] Before it can have any meaning to the participants, a situation must first be defined by them. A given act must be judged delinquent or criminal before it actually becomes so. The definition of the situation, rather than the situation itself, determines whether or not it will become the basis of family conflict. Social values are first the product of group definitions and later the product of the definitions of individual husbands and wives; when definitions differ between husband and wife, conflict may be imminent.

Families in which one member considers religion fundamentally important and the other does not may find that marital harmony is difficult. Others in which one member defines extramarital sex relations casually and the other considers them as flagitious may thereby have a fertile field for conflict. Marriage in which one partner defines the acquisition of wealth as the primary consideration and the other views money as a means to an end will find difficulty in making a satisfactory adjustment in our pecuniary society. When the definitions of the majority of situations facing a couple are essentially dissimiliar, the relationship will not be harmonious.

The importance of values in marital adjustment is indicated in Harvey J. Locke's study of happily married and divorced persons.[30] The data on social values are based upon the rating by each spouse of his or her own traits, plus a similar estimate of the traits of the other. In general, the happy couples showed a basic similarity of values, whereas the divorced couples showed a wide divergence. The values in the study ranged over a variety of matters, such as income, church attendance, modern conveniences, saving money, gainful employment of women, recreational activities, and conventional behavior. The latter factor, in turn, involved such matters as "where the marriage took place, age at which attendance at Sunday school was terminated, affiliation with a church, regularity of church attendance, and the like. . . ."[31] The precise nature of the questions was apparently not as important as the similarity of the value judgments, whatever they were.

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[28] Cf. William I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki, *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1927), Vol. I, "Methodological Note."

[29] William I. Thomas, *The Unadjusted Girl* (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1923), pp. 42-43.

[30] Locke, *Predicting Adjustment in Marriage.*

Affection and Family Conflict

The trend from the institutional family to the personal relationship has been accompanied by an increasing emphasis upon the affectional function. The intimate relationships of marriage have become more important in the process. Men and women seek these relationships as a refuge in a time of storm and stress. When the relationships are satisfactory, they can ignore many other elements of potential conflict. When affection does not provide the emotional satisfaction they have come to expect, conflicts may be magnified thereby. The high expectations with which romantic lovers enter marriage often cause them to invest its affectional aspects with undue importance. Difficulties in the physical performance of the affectional relationships may symbolize other conflicts or cause a conflict based upon personal incompatibility. In a number of ways, the failure of the affectional function to measure up to expectations may intensify marital conflict.

Affection means more than sex relationships, explicitly defined. Sexual factors in marriage are overemphasized in much contemporary thinking, in which they are considered as *the* basic cause of family conflict. Such a conception fails to consider the many secondary manifestations of affection which are remote from sex as commonly understood but are important in marital harmony. These demonstrations of affection are fundamental for a complete emotional life in marriage and continue long after the youthful fires of sex desire have subsided. The many tender contacts between husband and wife that distinguish a supremely happy marriage from a moderately happy or definitely unhappy one have little to do with sex in the narrow sense. Sexual factors cannot, of course, be completely divorced from such relationships, since they take place between two persons of opposite sex. The tenderness, affection, kindness, and consideration of a happy marriage cannot be considered apart from the sexual differences upon which it is based. But such factors are far more than a simple and direct expression of the sex impulse.

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[31] *Ibid.*, p. 243.

Affection is thus another area in which the marital partners may be unable to carry through their acquired self-other patterns (roles) in the manner they have expected. As a result of this failure, frustration occurs on the affectional level, a situation that has widespread implications for family conflict. The current emphasis upon marriage as an affectional relationship, often to the virtual exclusion of other considerations, means that the chances of frustration in this respect are high. The greater the expectations of affection, the greater the possibility of frustration. The standards have perhaps never been so high as they are in middle-class marriage today. The penalties for failure are correspondingly high.

The importance of affectional frustration is illustrated in a recent study of the length of time necessary to bring about satisfactory adjustments in marriage. Adjustments in sex relations were reported to have taken the longest time and hence (by implication) to have involved the greatest effort. Only half of the husbands and wives in the sample reported that they had made satisfactory sexual adjustments from the beginning of their marriage, and 12 per cent reported that they had *never* been able to do so, even after the marriage had lasted a score or more years.[32] Sexual adjustments are complicated social as well as physical relationships, and they are not limited to a technical knowledge of sexual practices. Conflicts on this level likewise involve the entire personality.

In her study of domestic-discord patterns, Harriet R. Mowrer considers some of the typical situations assumed by conflict on the sexual level. The most representative situations may be summarized as follows: [33]

1. *Attitudes toward Sex.* These attitudes grow out of the way of life and become deeply rooted in the personal values. They may involve a difference between husband and wife concerning the central role of sex—whether sex relationships should be carried on merely for the sake of propagation or engaged in for their own sake. Such

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[32] Judson T. Landis, "Length of Time Required to Achieve Adjustment in Marriage," *American Sociological Review*, December 1946, XI, 666-77.

[33] Adapted from Mowrer, *Personality Adjustment and Domestic Discord*, chap. 9, "The Sex-Conflict Pattern."

differences often arise in the contemporary world, with its hedonistic definitions of marriage. Persons raised in subcultures where the traditional conception of the family is still deeply ingrained tend to look upon sex relations for their own sake as immoral. As the trend toward emancipation in these matters continues, such conflicts may be gradually eliminated and the hedonistic definition of marriage may become the norm.

2. *Antagonism toward Sex.* An attitude of antagonism and repulsion toward sex on the part of the wife has traditionally been a common factor in family conflicts. It has often resulted from the position that the wife must submit to the gross animal excesses of the husband in an act which is essentially bestial and unclean. Wives who are unprepared for sex relationships have exhibited such revulsion that their subsequent marital life was completely warped. Frigidity or semi-frigidity has been a common result of these initial traumatic experiences. Such an emotional state is apparently largely psychosomatic in character, with the psychological revulsion conditioning the emotional reaction toward sex relations. The early experience of marital relationships thus may be a factor which so negatively conditions the wife that the entire marriage is in jeopardy.

3. *Lack of Satisfaction in Sex.* Closely related to antagonism toward sex as a source of conflict is the situation arising when the wife fails to derive any physical or emotional satisfaction from the relationship. The lack of elementary knowledge of sex hygiene may bring acute frustration and bitterness that becomes chronic after years of married life. The underlying psychological and physiological tensions may be directed against the husband as the most available object. Conflicts are often engendered from this tension, of which neither party may be completely aware. The conflict often takes symbolic form about some other factor with slight apparent relationship to the real cause.

4. *Fear of Pregnancy.* Many conflicts on the sexual level are based upon the fear of pregnancy. This fear is particularly evident when the wife already has had a number of pregnancies resulting either in more children than the family can afford or in self-induced or spontaneous abortion. In families where knowledge of contraception is a commonplace, such fear is not so apparent, but in those where religious or economic factors preclude the use of artificial methods it may become a nightmare. Unsatisfactory methods of attaining sex-

ual satisfaction without risking conception are often attempted, resulting in emotional tensions and latent conflicts for both husband and wife.

5. *Denial of Sex Relations.* In extreme cases, a complete denial of sex relationships may take place. This is usually the result of other conflicts, terminating in the symbolic act of the wife refusing to have relations with the husband. When conditions have reached this pass, the family is clearly in immediate danger of complete disorganization, even though the basis of the conflict may be entirely nonsexual. In a few states, such a refusal constitutes ground for divorce. In others, it is sometimes defined as cruelty, deprivation, or abandonment and hence constitutes grounds on the more euphemistic terms.[34]

Marital conflict arising from sexual factors is clearly a *psychological,* rather than a *physiological,* phenomenon. Social attitudes are the most important considerations in marital relationships, and the strictly physical aspects of the sexual act do not constitute the basic reasons for adjustment or conflict. The husband and wife bring certain definitions of sex behavior to their marriage, which definitions go far to determine the nature of the adjustment. These attitudes toward sex are partially formed many years before the persons actually experience sex behavior itself. As a basic component of personality, these attitudes tend to condition the reactions of the spouses. In the social interaction of marriage, these attitudes are subject to change and development. The important fact for our purpose, however, is the central role played by social attitudes, rather than strictly physical factors.

In concluding her remarks on the role of sex in marital conflict, Harriet R. Mowrer sums up its relative importance in the complex group of personality factors that comprise the conflict pattern. "Sex cannot," she points out, ". . . be considered the basic factor any more than any other of the factors which make up the conflict pattern." [35] There is a world of difference between recognizing that sexual difficulties underlie many marital conflicts and maintaining that sex is the only or major cause thereof. The conflict is usually so complex that it involves every phase of the marital relationship. Marital adjustment is an affair of two total personalities in constant interaction on many levels. Marital conflict is equally complicated. No unilateral explanation can tell the whole story of either phenomenon.

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[34] See also Locke, *Predicting Adjustment in Marriage,* pp. 146-48.

[35] Mowrer, *op. cit.,* p. 151.

In this chapter, we have considered the nature of family conflict in general and those conflicts in particular that reflect the personalities of the adult members. We are well aware of the arbitrary nature of the distinction between "personal" and "social" factors in this context, inasmuch as all such conflicts, whatever their origin, are ultimately expressed through the personalities of the husband and wife. Nevertheless, we have presented in this chapter such highly personal elements as the temperamental patterns and needs of the individuals; the behavior patterns acquired by the spouses in the parental family and elsewhere; the marital roles assumed by the husband and wife that define both the conception of their own behavior and that expected of the other; the values that form a basis for the life organization of the marital partners; and, finally, the attitudes of the members toward the part which affection is expected to play. The relationship between two persons in modern marriage is one of the most complex of which we have any knowledge. The personalities of the participants incorporate many expectations that are as subtle as they are difficult to attain.

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SOCIAL CONFLICTS AND FAMILY TENSIONS

In the preceding chapter, we considered the factors that grow out of the personalities of the spouses and bring about marital conflict. Many other factors impinge upon the family from without and have no direct connection with the personalities of the participants, except as all conflicts ultimately find expression through this medium. It is largely an arbitrary matter whether a given tension is said to originate in the individual or the society, since the ultimate expression occurs in the family orbit. We shall be concerned in this chapter with some of the elements from the general society that determine the behavior of the family members and generate conflict situations in this group.

The Nature of Social Conflict

Among the social conflicts are those engendered or intensified by religious or ethnic differences, occupation, employment of the wife, unemployment of the husband, and class status. These factors are all related to the position in the social structure occupied by the family. This does not necessarily mean "social position" as usually interpreted, which involves the presence or absence of high social status. We refer rather to the position of the family in the class structure of the larger society and the ecological base which the family occupies in the community. These influences may make either for harmonious adjustment or for conflict.

"The social reality of individuals," says Allison Davis, "differs in the most fundamental respects according to their status and culture. The individuals of different class cultures are reacting to different situations." [1] The individual has little choice in determining his initial position relative to certain social situations or in subsequently modifying this position once he has become involved therein. Like the character in one of A. E. Housman's poems, he is "a stranger and afraid" in a world he never made. He may, for example, do his best to adjust happily with his wife in terms of emotional needs, conjugal affection, and temperamental compatibility. In this field, his personal responsibility is great and his ability to adjust is correspondingly high. But he cannot do very much about the economic necessity of his wife's working, the business cycle that periodically sweeps him out of employment, or the religious differences which he and his wife have acquired in their own families of orientation.

Social and cultural conflict are closely related. The first derives from the position of the family in the social structure. The second derives from the culture which they have acquired as a result of their social position. Much of the conflict subsequently considered in this chapter is thus in the category of cultural conflict, which reflects the different subcultures that have been incorporated into the personalities of the spouses during their formative years. These cultural conflicts may in turn be considered in two different senses, following the analysis of Harriet R. Mowrer. The first or general type results "from the marriage of persons coming from areas in which the cultures are different." The second or specific type does not reflect differences in the general cultural background of the spouses "but rather . . . differing interpretations of culture superimposed on the general background by the specific family and nonfamily groups to which they belong." [2]

Cultural conflict on the *general* level involves such elements as religious beliefs, ethnic peculiarities, traditional roles of husband and wife, educational differentials, social level, and the many mannerisms that accompany these different ways of life. Cultural conflict on the *specific* level involves the personal behavior patterns which the individual has acquired from his family of orientation, each of which has its own interpretation of the larger culture. Attitudes toward family authority constitute a striking example of such specific cultural elements. The husband and wife acquire a set of attitudes toward authority in their family of orientation and bring this pattern to their family of procreation.[3]

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[1] Allison Davis, "Child Rearing in the Class Structure of American Society," chap. in *The Family in a Democratic Society* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1949), p. 69.

[2] Harriet R. Mowrer, *Family, Marriage, and Parenthood*, eds. Howard Becker and Reuben Hill (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1948), chap. 12, "Discords in Marriage," p. 381.

A successful marriage implies the growing identification of husband and wife in a common enterprise, based upon common values and definitions of the situation. Social groups embody different cultural values, which become a part of the individual life organization and may motivate marital conflicts after the initial romantic attraction has faded. In addition to their place in the personality patterns of the spouses, cultural differences may also produce marital conflicts because they symbolize contrasting ways of life. Religious differences, for example, may not cause marital dissension on theological grounds, but rather because they symbolize divergent ways of life and attitudes toward such matters as education, recreation, and sex relations.[4]

Religious Factors in Marital Conflict

Differences in religion thus constitute one of the most important phases of cultural conflict. In a heterogeneous society such as our own, the possibilities that persons of different religious backgrounds will meet and marry are great. In chapter 9, we considered some of the trends in such mixed marriages, and found that the principle of homogamy (like marrying like) seems to be ignored to an increasing degree in the matter of religion. Mixed marriages involving Catholics and Protestants appear to be on the increase. One authority, using official Catholic figures, estimates that approximately 30 per cent of all Catholic marriages (those sanctioned by the Church and conducted under its auspices) have been of the mixed variety during the past two decades.[5] In terms of marital adjustment, this trend has two implications: (a) The population is becoming more homogeneous, insofar as religious barriers to intermarriage are apparently breaking down; (b) The possibility of marital conflict on religious grounds is increasing proportionately, insofar as more persons of divergent faiths are marrying.[6]

[3] Hazel Ingersoll, "A Study of the Transmission of Authority Patterns in the Family," *Genetic Psychology Monographs*, 1948, XXXVIII, 225-302.

[4] Harriet R. Mowrer, *op. cit.*, p. 381.

[5] John L. Thomas, "The Factor of Religion in the Selection of Marriage Mates," *American Sociological Review*, August 1951, XVI, 491.

[6] Cf. August B. Hollingshead, "Cultural Factors in the Selection of Marriage Mates," *American Sociological Review*, October 1950, XV, 619-27.

We may examine this situation more closely, especially with regard to those mixed marriages involving Catholics and Protestants, inasmuch as these are by far the most important numerically. The Catholic Church has made certain institutional provisions for mixed marriages. The Protestant must, before marriage, sign an Ante-Nuptial agreement, wherein he agrees: (a) that the marriage contract shall be broken only by death; (b) that the children shall be baptized and educated in the Catholic faith; (c) that the couple shall abide by the principles of the Catholic Church on matters of contraception. Under these conditions, Church functionaries will officiate at the marriage, which is defined as occurring under Canon (that is, Church) law and hence is considered valid by the Church. All mixed marriages *not* held under the auspices of the Church are considered invalid.[7]

There are various possibilities for conflict in such mixed marriages, even where the Protestant spouse has signed the Ante-Nuptial agreement. The most important source of potential conflict involves the religious training of the children. Matters of dogma are apparently no longer important as a source of marital dissension. It often happens, however, that the spouse who signs the Ante-Nuptial agreement in good faith in the weeks or months before marriage is unable to project himself into the future when he will be a parent. Hence there is often an unwillingness to follow through with the agreement after the birth of children, especially if the Protestant spouse is strong in his or her own religious beliefs.[8]

These difficulties are especially strong when the mother is the Protestant. There is a strong tendency for the children in our society to take the faith of the mother, whatever that faith may be. Hence a Protestant mother will often find difficulty in rearing her children in a religious faith which she herself does not accept. Under these conditions, the Ante-Nuptial agreement may be openly or tacitly voided, a factor in itself that may be productive of marital tensions. The families of both parties often exacerbate the conflict by their solicitude that the children shall be reared in the faith which they (the grandparents) profess. The latter may openly interfere in the marriage and, in their efforts to maintain their own religious faith through the youngest generation, may make the conflict worse.[9]

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[7] See "Marriage—Mixed," *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Encyclopedia Press, Inc., 1910).

[8] Judson T. Landis, "Marriages of Mixed and Non-Mixed Religious Faith," *American Sociological Review*, June 1949, XIV, 401-7.

The importance of religious conflict as a possible source of marital tensions is suggested by the data on divorce in mixed marriages, as reported by three studies.[10] The results of these combined studies are summarized as follows: "Approximately 5 per cent of the Catholic and Jewish marriages had ended in divorce . . . , 8 per cent of the Protestant marriages, 15 per cent of mixed Catholic-Protestant, and 18 per cent of the marriages in which there was no religious faith."[11] Further analysis indicates that the religion of the female is also an important consideration in the mixed marriages ending in divorce. The divorce rate is highest in marriages where the man is a Catholic and the wife a Protestant. Twenty-one per cent of these marriages ended in divorce, whereas only 7 per cent of the marriages where the man was a Protestant and the wife a Catholic had been so terminated.[12] The divorce rate is, of course, not a completely adequate index to the incidence of marital conflict, inasmuch as many marriages are plagued by conflict, but, for religious or other reasons, no divorce action is ever initiated.

Conflict arising from the intermarriage of Jews and Gentiles has also been the subject of study. One such investigation makes the suggestion that persons of either religious faith who tend to intermarry are already somewhat emancipated and unconventional, so that their marriage might be expected to be unstable on these grounds alone.[13] Men and women who take their religious faith seriously tend to marry conventionally—that is, in the same religious faith. The element of conventionality in general appears to be important in marital adjustment, and couples who follow the conventional norms of their subculture tend to be better marital prospects than those who are more emancipated.[14] Hence the higher degree of instability characteristic ot Jewish-Gentile marriages may reflect the general unconventional personality structure of the participants, rather than religious factors as such.[15]

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[9] *Ibid.*, p. 406.

[10] In addition to the Landis study, the other two are H. Ashley Weeks, "Differential Divorce Rates by Occupation," *Social Forces*, March 1943, XXI, 334-37. Howard M. Bell, *Youth Tell Their Story* (Washington: American Council on Education, 1938), p. 21.

[11] Judson T. Landis, *op. cit.*, p. 403.

[12] *Ibid.*

[13] J. S. Slotkin, "Jewish-Gentile Intermarriage in Chicago," *American Sociological Review*, February 1942, VII, 34-39.

[14] Harvey J. Locke, *Predicting Adjustment in Marriage* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1951), "Conventionality," pp. 236-43.

Marital conflict is closely related to differences in culture that are emotionally defined. Membership in religious, ethnic, or racial minority groups carries emotional implications, for these groups are frequently the objects of prejudice. Prejudice against Jews and Catholics exists in certain subcultures, and these prejudices become part of the personality pattern of the individual. As these persons mature intellectually, they may sincerely believe themselves emancipated from their early prejudices. They may even marry a person of a different religious faith, serene in the belief that such prejudices are a relic of the Dark Ages and have no relevance to their own marriages. In the stress of personal tensions, however, these prejudices may unexpectedly revive, and the individual may react in a hostile fashion to his or her spouse. Religious differences thus become a symbol of conflict in many families that were sincerely founded on a tacit principle of religious tolerance.[16]

Ethnic Factors in Marital Conflict

Marital conflict based upon ethnic differences is so common in our heterogeneous society that only brief mention is necessary in this context. Ethnic differences are those reflecting the various cultural heritages of the groups that have settled in the United States. With millions of immigrants pouring into this country for several decades prior to World War I, it was inevitable (and highly desirable) that many of these new citizens and their children should fall in love and marry outside their ethnic group. Assimilation was hastened in this way, as individuals with differing cultures met and mingled their traditions and genic heritages. This process entails certain obvious difficulties in marital adjustment, which are not so apparent in the more homogeneous cultures of the Old World. Intermarriage is naturally greater in the industrial centers of our eastern and middle-western states, where persons of all nationality groups come in contact.[17] Many families in which the cultural divergences are too great have been, in a sense, casualties of the melting pot.

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[15] Cf. also Slotkin, "Adjustment in Jewish-Gentile Intermarriages," *Social Forces*, December 1942, XXI, 226-30.

[16] For a further discussion of some of these problems, see Milton L. Barron, "Research on Intermarriage: a Survey of Accomplishments and Prospects," *American Journal of Sociology*, November 1951, LVII, 249-55.

The intermarriage of such ethnically diverse groups as the Irish, Italians, and Poles may make for conflict on cultural grounds, even though religious conflict is minimized by the tendency of Catholics, Protestants, and Jews to marry within their own faiths.[18] Ethnic differences may offer a real or symbolic basis for marital conflict in a society that encourages marriage based on romantic love. In a study of poorly adjusted families in Providence, Rhode Island, the author concluded that "there is some evidence of a degree of maladjustment due to cultural conflicts between the European background and the American milieu and to conflicts of this sort within the family itself."[19] The combination of cultural heterogeneity and romantic individualism provides a ready-made basis for such conflicts. The democratization of marriage and the assimilation of different ethnic groups into a new and complex culture pattern exact a price in the instability of many families.

"Intermarriage," says Merton, "is the marriage of persons deriving from those different in-groups and out-groups other than the family which are culturally conceived as relevant to the choice of a spouse."[20] Intermarriage is comparatively unimportant in a homogeneous society, whereas it becomes increasingly important in a heterogeneous society, where the opportunities are greater. We are concerned here with intermarriage as a source of divergent behavior patterns in marital partners that give rise to tensions and conflicts. Intermarriage between members of different races or subraces is important in some societies, but the strong prejudice in our society against such unions makes them comparatively rare. Religious and ethnic factors, however, are more common and constitute grounds for conflict.

The forces making for intermarriage of diverse ethnic groups have been summarized as follows: "Premarital studies . . . indicate that young people of diverse groups are led into marital ties through economic propinquity and similarity, both occupational and spatial; by close association and common experiences in the amount, type, and locale of education; and by recreational contacts."[21] Strong vested interests in the various religious and ethnic institutions attempt to maintain endogamy by preventing the young people from leaving the traditional groups and thereby abandoning their cultural heritage. There is thus a strong ambivalence in American society on the subject of intermarriage. Many persons deplore the rate at which the cultural heritages are diluted in this way, but at the same time they encourage the democratic forces that give rise to intermarriage.[22]

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[17] James H. S. Bossard, "Nationality and Nativity as Factors in Marriage," *American Sociological Review*, December 1939, IV, 792-98.

[18] Ruby Jo Reeves Kennedy, "Single or Triple Melting Pot? Intermarriage Trends in New Haven, 1870-1940," *American Journal of Sociology*, January 1944, XLIX, 331-39.

[19] Raymond R. Willoughby, "A Study of Some Poorly Adjusted Families," *American Sociological Review*, February 1942, VII, 55.

[20] Robert K. Merton, "Intermarriage and the Social Structure," *Psychiatry*, August 1941, IV, 362.

The long-range implications of cultural conflict, both in and out of marriage, become less serious when viewed in the light of the decreasing proportion of the foreign-born. In 1920, the foreign-born numbered 14.5 per cent of the population; by 1930, this percentage had declined to 12.7; in 1940, it had shrunk to 9.7; and in 1950, the foreign-born comprised only 6.7 per cent of the total population.[23] The virtual cessation of immigration for more than two decades has diminished this source of new population, especially in the marriageable age groups. The foreign-born population is, furthermore, an aging group whose members are rapidly becoming grandparents and watching their grandchildren become assimilated into American culture. These general observations are by no means calculated to minimize the cultural contribution of the various foreign-born groups but merely to indicate that many of the same traits that enrich the pattern of American culture also contribute to family conflict.

In a study of 325 mixed marriages, involving differences in race, religion, and ethnic group, Baber concluded that homogamy (similarity) is important in marital adjustment. He said that "comparing all three groups—inter-faith, inter-nationality, inter-racial—*the degree of happiness varied inversely with the degree of difference in culture or color.*"[24] The intimacy of marriage is so great that many of the conflicts latent in cultural and religious differences find sharp expression in the family. Cultural factors play a basic role in forming the personality. Other things being equal, the greater the degree of personal differences, the greater the potential for conflict in the family.[25]

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[21] Milton L. Barron, "Research on Intermarriage: a Survey of Accomplishments and Prospects," *op. cit.*, p. 250.

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 255.

[23] See Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service, *Annual Reports*, for a statement of the current trends in immigration.

[24] Ray E. Baber, "A Study of 325 Mixed Marriages," *American Sociological Review*, October 1937, II, 705-16. His italics.

Occupational Factors in Marital Conflict

In the intricate division of labor of the modern world, personality assumes many facets that are reflected in the marital relationship. Behavior patterns acquired in certain occupational roles may complicate the marriage relationship. The more complex the division of labor, the greater the segmentalization of these roles. The manner in which men and women earn their living exerts a considerable over-all influence upon their family relationships. On his daily excursions outside the home, the wage earner comes in contact with many differential social influences that affect his family behavior. The economic world of the farmer, for example, is virtually synonymous with his family world, a situation that does not exist for wage earners or salaried employees, whose labor is carried on far from the home.

Agreement exists up to this point concerning the general influence of occupation upon the statuses and roles of the family members. Much less agreement exists as to the implications of these occupational factors for marital conflict. Some students maintain that occupation has an important bearing upon marital conflict. The logical difficulty here is to isolate the occupational factor from the entire constellation of factors that may produce conflict. Other persons are equally certain that occupation plays a negligible role in family adjustment and maladjustment. We may review some of the representative findings on both sides of this complex question.

A study of the backgrounds of 6,475 children in the secondary schools of Spokane, Washington, throws some preliminary light upon the question of occupation and marital conflict. Irrespective of religious affiliation, the study shows that "the divorce rates increase progressively from the professional group through the proprietary, clerical, skilled, and semi-skilled groups. The unskilled group reverses the trend and shows a lower rate than any group except the professional . . . this group [the unskilled] shows the highest separation rate of any of the occupational classifications." [26] The author attributes some of these differences to economic factors, pointing out that "the rates are lowest for the high social-economic classes and highest for the low social-economic classes (except the unskilled group)." [27]

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[25] Cf. also John Biesanz and Luke M. Smith, "Adjustment of Interethnic Marriages on the Isthmus of Panama," *American Sociological Review*, December 1951, XVI, 819-22.

In an analysis of data from sample surveys, the Bureau of the Census lists the major occupational groups in terms of their "proneness to divorce." The national "ranking" of the various occupational categories in terms of an elaborate "index" is as follows: [28]

Professional, semi-professional	67.7
Proprietors, managers, officials	68.6
Clerical, sales	71.8
Craftsmen, foremen	86.6
Operatives (semi-skilled)	94.5
Laborers (except farm and mine)	180.3
Service workers	254.7

These general relationships are confirmed by William J. Goode in a study of divorce in the metropolitan area of Detroit. He found that family disorganization ending in divorce was less prevalent among the professional and proprietary groups and most prevalent among the semi-skilled and unskilled operatives. On the basis of this and similar evidence,[29] Goode concluded that "*there is a rough inverse correlation between economic status and rate of divorce.*" [30] This conclusion is at variance with the commonsense conception of a high degree of conflict and divorce among the proprietary, professional, and higher-income groups generally, as contrasted with the quiet domestic happiness of the working class. Like many other judgments in the folk culture, this latter idea seems to be incorrect. Economic assurance and all that goes with it in the way of adequacy of income and high professional status seem to be conducive to family stability, whereas poverty and low occupational status seem to produce the opposite effect.

[26] H. Ashley Weeks, "Differential Divorce Rates by Occupations," *Social Forces*, March 1943, XXI, 334-37.

[27] *Ibid.*, p. 336.

[28] Bureau of the Census, "Population Characteristics," *Current Population Reports*, December 23, 1948 and April 19, 1950, Series P-50. Quoted by William J. Goode, "Economic Factors and Marital Stability," *American Sociological Review*, December 1951, XVI, 805.

[29] Cf. Ernest W. Burgess and Leonard S. Cottrell, Jr., *Predicting Success or Failure in Marriage* (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1939), p. 138.

[30] William J. Goode, *op. cit.*, p. 803. His italics.

The relationship between occupational status, economic position, and family stability is not simple and direct. Many variables are present in addition to the amount of income as such. The *symbolic* character of the income (that is, its social meaning) is an important consideration, involving questions such as the definition of the role of the husband as a breadwinner in the different social strata. Furthermore, economic strain is greater in the lower-income groups, and these tensions are often communicated to other phases of the family relationship. The effect of occupation upon marital conflict is thus extremely complex and embraces such social (as distinguished from strictly economic) considerations as the earning roles of husband and wife, the stability of the income, and the control of the family finances. These factors are all subject to social definition and meaningful interpretation by the family and the subculture in which it operates.[31]

These general conclusions are seriously questioned in Harvey J. Locke's study of a group of divorced and happily married persons. In analyzing marital adjustment, he finds that there are no significant differences between the occupations held at the time of marriage by the happily married and by the divorced men. The same situation applies to the occupations held by the men *during* marriage. In conclusion, Locke states that "the occupations of the happily married and divorced men and women were similar to those of the general population of the area in which the study was made, and with minor exceptions the happily-married and divorced were not significantly different." [32] The type of occupation of the husband did not appear to be important in this study. Hence we must conclude our discussion of occupational factors in marital conflict with the statement that the verdict is not yet in.

Employment Factors in Marital Conflict

Employment as such, rather than the specific nature of the occupation, is a further consideration in marital conflict. Tensions may be generated by two general factors: (1) the employment of the wife, and (2) the unemployment of the husband.

1. *Employment of the Wife.* The gainful employment of married

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[31] *Ibid.*, pp. 807 ff.

[32] Locke, *Predicting Adjustment in Marriage*, pp. 273-74.

women outside the home is an occupational factor that is presumably productive of marital and family conflict. Traditional conceptions of the roles of husband and wife are still firmly imbedded in the mores and constitute psychological roadblocks on both the conscious and unconscious levels to the employment of women. The husband whose wife is forced to work to supplement the family income may experience feelings of inferiority because he considers himself a failure in the most fundamental masculine occupational role. Unable to earn enough to maintain his family on a minimum level of health and decency, he may develop aggressive tendencies to compensate for his thwarted ability to play his traditional role.[33]

Families in the higher socio-economic groups may present other problems of marital adjustment. Most married women work because they have to, not for any self-idealization in the role of a career woman. The career wife is thus not numerous, as compared to the millions of wives who work for stark utilitarian reasons. Nevertheless, the career wife plays an important role among certain groups. The latter are found, broadly speaking, among the social levels in which the traditional institutional functions of the family have already been greatly modified by other factors.

The gainful employment of married women has been increasing in recent years. Participation of married women in the labor force has grown, rather than declined, in the postwar years. In April, 1951, there were approximately 10,200,000 married women in the labor force, as compared to 5,400,000 single women. The relative participation of single women, however, is nearly twice as great as that of married women, with 49.6 per cent of all single women gainfully employed, as compared to 26.7 per cent of all married women.[34] The latter figure is extremely significant in this connection, however, for it marks the highest participation in gainful employment ever reached by the married women of this country. Widowed and divorced women show an even higher participation in the labor force, with

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[33] This general position is also questioned by Locke, who states that the data in his study indicate that "employment of the wife is not associated with her marital adjustment or with her husband's marital adjustment." Locke, *Predicting Adjustment in Marriage*, p. 294.

[34] Bureau of the Census, "Marital Status of Women in the Labor Force: April, 1951," *Current Population Reports: Labor Force*, December 26, 1951, Series P-50, No. 37.

36.1 per cent of this group listed as gainfully employed.[35] Relationships within the family have undergone a significant change as a result of the increased employment ratio of married women.

The increasing economic independence of the wife may lead to family conflict. The possibility of self-support may make many wives more willing to risk the dissolution of marital ties when romantic and other satisfactions are not forthcoming. Especially among the middle classes, the wife has been conditioned to expect great affectional satisfactions, which will so fill her life that she is willing to forgo economic independence to attain them. In an earlier day, the wife had no preliminary period of economic freedom prior to marriage and no possibility of economic independence thereafter. Hence she was willing to accept the economic dependence of marriage with comparative equanimity, especially when she had not been conditioned to expect the excessive emotional gratifications of romantic love. Today there must be a considerable *quid pro quo* of affection before she will permanently abandon her freedom.

2. *Unemployment of the Husband.* Unemployment as a source of family conflict is largely the product of a recent developmental stage of the industrial arts. Unemployment is not a widespread family problem in a predominantly agricultural society. The loss of a means of livelihood and the corrosive impact of this experience upon family relationships is primarily characteristic of an industrial order. When the chief breadwinner is unemployed, society impinges upon the family group with a vengeance. Under the vast impersonality of modern society, there is a negligible relationship between the abilities of the breadwinner and the regularity of his employment. Unemployment falls like the rain upon the lazy and the industrious alike. The stability of the family suffers accordingly.

In recent years, unemployment in the United States has been at a minimum. The decade of the 1940's saw virtually full employment because of war and postwar economic conditions. In 1949, unemployment averaged 3,400,000 persons throughout the year. This figure was reduced to an average annual total of 3,100,000 persons in 1950 and declined still further to an average annual figure of 1,900,000 in

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[35] Bureau of the Census, "Marital and Family Characteristics of the Labor Force in the United States: April, 1951," *Current Population Reports: Labor Force*, May 28, 1952, Series P-50, No. 39.

1951.[36] This is a far cry from the estimated 12 to 15 million unemployed during the great depression of the 1930's, but the postwar figure is still considerable in terms of family conflict. Whatever the total number, unemployment falls hard upon the individual family, with the loss of income, stability, and symbolic status. A secure economic base is necessary for the efficient functioning of the family group.

No set behavior pattern characterizes the reactions of all families to unemployment. Families that faced reality squarely before this crisis tend to do the same in the midst of it, whereas those that evaded reality before they were unemployed may continue to do so afterward. Unemployment rarely brings about an entirely new reaction pattern in the individual; personality is more closely integrated than is often suspected. Rather does this crisis situation bring about an exaggeration of personality patterns and roles that have been previously observed. Husbands who drink occasionally before they are unemployed often begin to drink to excess after they lose their jobs. Harmonious families may be drawn closer together and disunited families may grow farther apart. Tensions that already exist become exacerbated by the massive crisis of unemployment.[37]

One of the situations most productive of conflict involves the performance of marital roles. The husband in our society has traditionally been the breadwinner, and failure to measure up to this role causes an acute sense of frustration and inferiority. The social expectations are so intimate a part of the personality that the unemployed man often cannot rid himself of a sense of futility, even though the reasons for his unemployment are beyond his control. So pervasive are these expectations that the wife also tends to blame the husband, no matter how much affection she may have for him. These feelings of inferiority and resentment are often unconscious. They may underlie many family conflicts that are superficially attributed to other causes. The *symbolic* importance of the job is very great and a failure to play this role brings about difficult family adjustments.[38]

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[36] Bureau of the Census, "Annual Report on the Labor Force: 1951," *Current Population Reports: Labor Force*, May 19, 1952, Series P-50, No. 40.

[37] Ruth S. Cavan and Katherine H. Ranck, *The Family and the Depression* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938), pp. 8-9.

[38] William J. Goode, "Economic Factors and Marital Stability," *op. cit.*, pp. 807-08.

Social Class and Marital Conflict

"By defining the people with whom an individual may have intimate social relationships," says Allison Davis, "our social class system narrows his learning and training environment." [39] The goals of the individual, his definitions, symbols, and values reflect the subculture of the class in which he lives and with whose members he can freely associate. We have considered the implications of social class upon the family in different contexts throughout this book. We have also examined some of the conflicts that grow out of the position of the family in the social structure. Religious conflicts, ethnic differences, occupational backgrounds, the stability of employment of the husband, the prevalence and type of employment of the wife—these and other considerations are related, directly or indirectly, to the class status of the family. In this final section, we may examine some of the other ways in which family tensions are related to social class.

The role of social class involves both the family of orientation and the family of procreation. The definitions and personality patterns which the individual learns as a child determine in large part the nature of his marital relationships and his adjustments thereto.[40] Persons reared in working-class families have different marital expectations from persons reared in upper-middle-class families. Each person brings with him to marriage the expectations which he has acquired from his class background. In the family of procreation, family differences also appear, depending upon the class orientation. The working-class family, for example, is constantly faced with the threat of economic insecurity, whereas the upper-middle-class family is more concerned with symbolic deprivations, such as the loss of affection.[41]

In a significant essay on the implications of social class for family stability, August B. Hollingshead suggests some of the differential factors that (at least potentially) make for marital conflict. The family and the class system constitute two closely related and reciprocal centers of orientation, which together go far toward determining the general pattern of reaction, both before and after marriage.[42] Ascribed status is a function of the family of orientation, whereas achieved status is reflected in the family of procreation. During his lifetime, the individual may thus occupy two different status systems, although it appears that only about one out of every four or five persons actually moves appreciably upward in the status system during his lifetime. The change is ordinarily more important for the man than for the woman, inasmuch as the status of the family is usually based upon the status of the husband, rather than that of the wife.[43]

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[39] Davis, "Child Rearing in the Class Structure of American Society," *op. cit.*, p. 58.

[40] Cf. August B. Hollingshead, "Cultural Factors in the Selection of Marriage Mates," *op. cit.*, pp. 625-27.

[41] Cf. Earl L. Koos, "Class Differences in Family Reactions to Crisis," *Marriage and Family Living*, Summer 1950, XII, 77-78.

The nature and extent of marital conflict are thus in part reflections of the status position of the family. We may discuss briefly some of the factors that are related to this position. Many of these differentials are inferred rather than precisely derived from the pertinent data, inasmuch as there has been comparatively little research on this exact relationship. In our discussion, we shall follow Hollingshead, who deals with the four major groups of upper, middle, working, and lower classes. He divides the upper class into two categories with respect to family instability, and speaks of the "established" and the "new" upper classes in this connection. He divides the middle class into the more familiar "upper-middle" and "lower-middle" categories, and the working class and the lower class are treated separately.[44] This conception of the class structure, it may be noted, differs somewhat from that advanced by W. Lloyd Warner and his associates in their Yankee City studies.[45]

Upper-Class Factors in Marital Conflict

The families in the established upper class (that is, the "upper-upper" category of Warner) are characterized by a strong emphasis

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[42] Hollingshead, "Class Differences in Family Stability," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, November 1950, CCLXXII, 39-46.

[43] Carson McGuire, "Family Backgrounds and Community Patterns," *Marriage and Family Living*, Fall 1951, XIII, 162.

Cf. also Carson McGuire, "Social Stratification and Mobility Patterns," *American Sociological Review*, April 1950, XV, 195-204.

[44] Hollingshead, "Class Differences in Family Stability," *op. cit.* Unless otherwise noted, the following data are taken from this perceptive article.

[45] The Warner pattern is sixfold and consists of the following classes: Upper-upper; lower-upper; upper-middle; lower-middle; upper-lower; lower-lower. Cf. W. Lloyd Warner and P. S. Lunt, *The Social Life of a Modern Community* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1941).

upon family background, extending from generation to generation. These families have great pride in their lineage and attempt to maintain endogamy by having their children marry within the comparatively narrow confines of this class. Control over the marital choice of the children is greater than that found in any other segment of American society, where freedom of choice is the democratic ideal. The parents of established families are anxious that their children shall marry "well," by which they mean within the orbit of their own class. This group is favored by economic security, continued over the generations and often enhanced by family trusts. In this way, each generation can use the interest on the family fortune, but the principal is continued intact.

The established upper-class family thus has certain definite characteristics that militate against its instability. This does not, of course, mean that there is no conflict in such families, but merely that the conflicts do not often bring about the dissolution of the family unit. These families have a high degree of homogamy because of the strong element of parental choice in marriage. Hence the possibility for many social conflicts is not as great as it would be where the choice is more highly individualized. In short, as Hollingshead points out, this family is "stable, extended, tends to pull together when its position is threatened—in this instance by an out-marriage—exerts powerful controls on its members to ensure that their behavior conforms to family and class codes, and provides for its members economically by trust funds and appropriate positions." [46]

The "new" upper-class family is not so stable. This family is the result of rapid vertical mobility, whereby it is catapulted into the upper economic brackets in a single generation. This fact in itself makes for a variety of conflicts and for a resultant instability. The new family has all the physical symbols of great wealth, in the form of a large house (or houses), fine automobiles, several servants, and elaborate clothes. But it lacks the assurance of hereditary status and the stability that goes with it. Furthermore, the family that reaches the pinnacle of great wealth in a single generation usually has a male head who is a driving individualist. This personality pattern often takes the form of open or concealed aggression toward all the persons in his environment, including the members of his immediate family.

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[46] Hollingshead, "Class Differences in Family Stability," *op. cit.*, p. 42.

The new upper-class family thus has only one factor that makes for stability—namely, economic security. Even this element, however, lacks the continuity found in the established family. In addition, the new upper-class family is often characterized by spending on a conspicuous level, fast living, emotional insecurity, alienation among its members, and instability in general. Alcoholism, acute boredom, divorce, broken homes, and many other forms of social maladjustment often mark the family in which wealth has been newly acquired. When the family head initially left his humble class background, resolved to make his mark in the world by amassing a large fortune, happiness seemed concomitant with financial success. When economic success has been gained, however, family happiness does not automatically follow.

Middle-Class Factors in Marital Conflict

The middle-class family appears, in general, to be a stable unit, at least in terms of conflicts that impinge upon it from without. This does *not*, of course, mean that the middle-class family is immune from tensions and conflicts of a personal nature, arising from temperamental and emotional factors. Indeed, the middle-class family appears to experience its conflicts primarily in the field of interpersonal relations. These conflicts center both in the relationships between parents and children and those between the spouses. The conflicts between parents and children seem to be more prevalent than those between the parents themselves, although the latter conflicts constitute more serious threats to the physical integrity of the family.[47] In terms of the factors that cause conflict and instability of the family unit from without, however, the middle-class family is comparatively stable, in comparison with either the newly established upper-class family or the family of the working and lower classes.

The self-discipline and strict moral standards of the middle-class family tend to keep this group together, in the sense that there is little actual dissolution. The very aspirations of this family, however, make it more sensitive to the frustrations inherent in modern society. The middle-class family has extremely high ideals, both for its parental members and even more for its children. The pressure to maintain these ideals is very great. The resulting psychic tensions upon the members of the middle-class family thus tend to be greater than those experienced either by the established upper-class family or the working-class family. "Since middle-class families have . . . higher levels of aspiration," says Koos, "and since they are under greater pressure to maintain these levels, it may well follow that the middle-class family is more sensitive to the frustrations of modern living than its lower-class counterpart." [48]

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[47] Earl L. Koos, "Class Differences in Family Reactions to Crisis," op. *cit.*, p. 77.

The difficulties of the middle-class family, as noted, tend to center more strongly about the relationships of parents and children than about the relationships of the spouses toward each other. The conflicts impinging upon this family from without thus seem to be related to its class status, especially that of the children. Members of the middle class have a strong urge toward upward mobility for themselves and their children. This goal can be gained only through education, and the parents set great store by this process. In so doing, however, they often create other conflicts by educating the children toward values and goals that are alien to those of the parents. The children may therefore develop class values that are different from (although not necessarily "better" than) those held by their parents. Many middle-class families are in this sense casualties of the American process of vertical mobility.

Working-Class Factors in Marital Conflict

The degree of family instability becomes progressively greater as we descend the economic scale from the middle class to the working class and lower class.[49] This is especially apparent in terms of the family cycle. The family cycle refers to the development of the family of procreation, from the time of marriage, through the birth and rearing of children, and finally into the old age of the marital pair.[50] Hollingshead has indicated that the family cycle is broken "prematurely" almost twice as frequently among working-class families as among middle-class families. Desertion, divorce, and death combine to disrupt from one-fourth to one-third of all families in the working class.[51] Family instability is not precisely equated with marital conflict, but the two are certainly related. Hence we may presume that working-class families have more than their share of social conflicts.

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[48] *Ibid.*, p. 78.

[49] William J. Goode, "Economic Factors and Marital Stability," *op. cit.*, p. 803.

[50] Paul C. Glick, "The Family Cycle," *American Sociological Review*, April 1947, XII, 164-74.

The working class is, by definition, largely dependent upon wages earned by the hour, the day, or the week. This class is therefore extremely vulnerable to swings in the business cycle, whereby large numbers of family heads are unemployed for prolonged periods. We have considered the effects of unemployment upon the role expectations of the husband and wife, and hence we need not repeat our analysis here. The working-class family is also faced with the employment of the wife outside the home, which factor may have other complications for the conflict pattern. The strong obligation upon many working-class families to care for relatives during times of stress may also contribute to the conflicts implicit in their way of life.

The dividing line between classes is an arbitrary and hazy one. The line between the working class and the lower class is no exception. Indeed, the class structure may be considered as a continuum, with the established and highly stable upper-class families at one end of the scale and the casual "companionate" or common-law family of the lower class at the other. The "typical" lower-class family is recognizable, however, as one whose members are at the bottom of the economic scale, with poorly-paid jobs, at unpleasant and often dirty work, periodically unemployed, and living under hand-to-mouth conditions in general. Families at this social level are the most unstable of all, with an estimated 50 to 60 per cent prematurely broken by such factors as divorce, desertion, separation, unemployment, imprisonment, and death.[52]

The culture of the lower-class family has been described by Allison Davis in his essay on slum children. The families living in these areas tend to have certain characteristics peculiar to their social status, which, as often as not, contribute to group instability. Slum families are economically insecure; full of anxieties concerning their future food and shelter; extravagant in the sense of spending lavishly on "nonessentials" when they have the money; aggressive toward each other and toward outsiders; and permissive in the rearing of their children. The relationships within the slum family are often marked by physical violence. The child is taught to be aggressive toward his brothers and sisters, as well as toward the members of his age group. He may have a direct example in the home, where violence between husband and wife is not uncommon. The social setting of the lower-class family is therefore conducive to many forms of tensions and conflicts that are found only rarely, if at all, in the other social levels. Behavior in the family, like all behavior, is a response to the social situation.[53]

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[51] Hollingshead, "Class Differences in Family Stability," *op. cit.*, p. 44.

[52] *Ibid.*, p. 45.

In this chapter, we have considered some of the conflict situations that affect the family from without. All conflict ultimately involves two or more personalities, and hence the distinction between personal and social conflict may be theoretical rather than real. We have distinguished between these two groups of factors largely for pedagogical purposes, although in some instances a distinct line may be drawn between such "personal" factors as temperamental differences and such "social" factors as unemployment and class status. The present chapter has dealt with the nature of social conflicts in general and such specific factors as religious differences, ethnic disparities, occupational influences, the unemployment of the husband, the employment of the wife, and, finally, those diffuse but pertinent elements subsumed under the general heading of social class.[54] The society of contemporary America and the culture by which it lives both present difficulties for the family.

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[53] Davis, "Child Rearing in the Class Structure of American Society," *op. cit.*

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LOCKE, HARVEY J., *Predicting Adjustment in Marriage*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, Inc., 1951. A careful study of the factors that contribute to both sides of the equation of the modern family —namely, those factors that tend to make for adjustment and for maladjustment.

SLOTKIN, J. S., "Jewish-Gentile Intermarriage in Chicago," *American Sociological Review*, February 1942, VII, 34-39. A study of religious intermarriage and some typical marital patterns arising therefrom.

THOMAS, JOHN L., "The Factor of Religion in the Selection of Marriage Mates," *American Sociological Review*, August 1951, XVI, 487-91. The trends in mixed marriages between Catholics and non-Catholics are examined with indication that these marriages appear to be increasing.

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THE BROKEN FAMILY: DEATH, DESERTION, DIVORCE

WE HAVE BEEN CONCERNED up to this point with the family in its "normal" or "natural" state, as that state is defined in our society. The "normal" family is composed of husband and wife living together in the home, with or without children. In a recent survey of the civilian population of marriageable age (14 years of age and older), 22 per cent were single; 65 per cent were married persons living together; 3 per cent were married persons living apart from their husbands or wives; 8 per cent were widowed; and 2 per cent were divorced.[1] Hence the broken family is important in statistical as well as human terms, and constitutes an appreciable segment of the population. The "normal" family comprises the majority of persons, but the family broken by death, desertion, and divorce is more than a small disorganized fringe. Millions of men, women, and children live in some form of broken family.

The Nature of the Broken Family

The above enumeration, furthermore, describes the situation only *at a single moment of time*. Many persons living in the families described as "normal" have reached that status through remarriage following death or divorce, and hence represent the amalgamation of fragments of previously broken families. Such persons have been faced one or more times in their adult lives with the death, desertion, or divorce of a spouse. The problem therefore assumes a cumulative proportion that is not suggested by any single enumeration. The history of many normal families would thus reveal that the grim spectre of disruption had been faced by a large number of them. A recent survey disclosed that one out of every eight wives in this country has been previously married, whereas in more than one out of every six families *either* the husband or wife has been previously married.[2]

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[1] Bureau of the Census, "Marital Status and Household Characteristics: April, 1951," *Current Population Reports: Population Characteristics*, April 29, 1952, Series P-20, No. 38.

The broken family is therefore of more than academic interest, even to the families that, at the moment, are still unbroken. The prospect of eventual family disruption through death is extremely high. The prospect of separation or divorce is by no means negligible. In a stable society where desertion and divorce are unthinkable, the disruption of the family through death is the only threat to its physical integrity. Our society lacks such essential stability. The family as an institution therefore exists in a state of dynamic equilibrium, with large numbers of individual families annually succumbing to the centrifugal forces existing therein. The study of the broken family is therefore central to that of the normal family.

The different ways in which the family is broken evoke different social definitions, depending upon the real or putative threat to group values arising from the action. Death is a termination that evokes sympathetic understanding. Death is almost universally defined as an "Act of God" and hence has no implication of moral turpitude. Desertion and separation violate the mores, but the attendant secrecy involves less condemnation than an open break in the symbolic pattern. Religious prohibitions against divorce obscure the public attitude toward desertion and separation, since the latter are often tacitly condoned as preferable to divorce. Divorce is a public avowal that the marital relationship has ceased to exist, and hence receives the full force of public disapproval that is lacking in death and obscured in desertion and separation. Divorce is still widely viewed as a deliberate violation of the sacred unity of the family, which is one of the basic symbols of our society. Those who most heartily condemn divorce can accept weakness but not heresy.

In view of the above statements, it is widely assumed that the disorganization of the family has been steadily increasing for several decades. The divorce rate, it is true, has shown an increase from decade to decade since before the turn of the century. Furthermore.

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[2] Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, "The American Wife," *Statistical Bulletin*, April 1951.

the rate of increase is greater than that of the population as a whole. Hence it is almost universally believed that the rate of marital dissolution as a *whole* has shown a similar increase.

This is not true. The rate of broken families has actually decreased considerably in recent decades. This apparent discrepancy between the increase in the divorce rate and the over-all decrease in the rate of family dissolution as a whole arises from the rapid decrease in the death rate. The divorce rate has increased from approximately 3 per 1,000 married couples in the early 1890's to 12 per 1,000 in the late 1940's. During the same period, however, the annual rate of marital disruption by death has decreased from 30 per 1,000 married couples to approximately 19 per 1,000. "In other words," says the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, "the combined rate of marital dissolutions resulting from divorce and from death is somewhat lower now than it was 60 years ago." [3]

The vulnerability of the family to these two forms of dissolution (death and divorce) varies with the duration of the marriage. Divorce is the greater hazard during the early years, with the divorce rate approximately 3½ times the mortality rate in the third year of marriage. Divorce is not exceeded by death as a cause of family disruption until the 15th year of marriage. Beyond this point, the death rate shows a steady increase with the duration of the marriage, whereas the divorce rate declines. In terms of differential rates per 1,000 marriages, the divorce rate rises abruptly to a peak in the third year, when the rate is 40 per 1,000 marriages. At the same period, the death rate is less than 10 per 1,000 marriages. The divorce rate then declines sharply to 26 per 1,000 marriages in the ninth year, after which it continues at approximately the same rate until the 20th year. The rate of dissolution for death alone shows a slow but steady climb after the 10th year, and after the 30th year the rates for death and divorce virtually parallel each other. Not until the 32nd year of marriage, however, does the dissolution rate from both causes exceed that from divorce alone registered in the third year.[4]

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[3] Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, "Have Broken Families Increased?" *Statistical Bulletin*, November 1949.

See also Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, "Lower Mortality Promotes Family Stability," *Statistical Bulletin*, May 1951.

[4] Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, "Have Broken Families Increased?" *op. cit.*

Death and the Broken Family

Death dissolves more families than all the other factors combined. Death comes to all men and women, whereas desertion and divorce are far from universal experiences. In the "normal" course of events, more than 600,000 marriages are annually broken by death, with 667,000 constituting the figure in a representative year. If the mortality conditions of 1900 still obtained, however, the annual toll would be close to 1,000,000 from this cause alone. The estimated death total of 667,000 families comprised 449,000 husbands and 218,000 wives, with 371,000 children under eighteen orphaned by the death of one parent.[5] These figures indicate the magnitude of this form of family disruption in a single year. Under these circumstances, the wonder is that the family broken by death is not universally defined as a major social problem.

The reason for this comparative neglect of death and bereavement lies in the delicacy of the subject and the accompanying prohibitions. The mores are against investigating this most universal of all situations.[6] Death is not a social problem in the strict sense, since it is the eventual end of all men and of all families. Furthermore, nothing can be done about it in final analysis, although efforts can be made to decrease *premature* death. Desertion and divorce, on the other hand, are subject, in theory at least, to amelioration by appropriate social action. These forms of family disorganization are defined as undesirable, since they threaten the social value of the indissolubility of the family. Death is thus an "Act of God," whereas desertion and divorce are clearly acts of men.[7]

The widow with dependent children faces an immediate economic problem. In a recent year, as noted, the 449,000 deceased husbands were survived by their wives and by 239,000 children. Most widows do not have complete financial protection and must provide for themselves, at least in part. They can usually expect some help from the savings or life insurance of their husbands. Approximately four-fifths of all families are insured, with an average of $6,000 insurance per family. In addition, the widow can expect some financial aid under the Social Security Act. But many widows with dependent children must go to work, at the very time they are needed most in the home. Almost half of the widows with preschool children are in the labor force, as compared to less than a third of the widows without young children. Approximately 2,000,000 widows are in the labor force at any one time.[8]

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[5] Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, "Lower Mortality Promotes Family Stability," *op. cit.*

[6] Cf. Thomas D. Eliot, "Handling Family Strains and Shocks," chap. 21, *Family, Marriage, and Parenthood*, eds. Howard Becker and Reuben Hill (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1948).

[7] Francis E. Merrill, "The Study of Social Problems," *American Sociological Review*, June 1948, XIII, 251-59.

The most satisfactory adjustment to widowhood is remarriage. The number of widows who remarry annually is not known exactly, nor is the total number who have remarried at any time following the death of their spouse. The chances of remarriage depend upon several considerations: (a) *Duration of Widowhood.* Women recently bereaved have better chances for remarriage than those whose bereavement is of longer duration. The second year of widowhood is the most popular time for remarriage. (b) *Number of Children.* There seems to be some correlation between the number of children and the chance for remarriage, with the chances decreasing with the number of children. (c) *Widow's Pensions.* In case the widow receives a pension that terminates upon remarriage, she may be unwilling to forfeit this benefit and therefore examines such offers with care. For the most part, however, widows do not voluntarily remain permanently in this state, especially those widowed in their early years.[9]

The position of the widower differs in many respects from that of the widow. In a recent year, some 218,000 men became widowers. The most immediate problem of the widow is usually economic, since the income of the breadwinner is cut off. The widower undergoes no such loss, since he is normally the chief provider. He is, however, often forced to pay for a housekeeper or other person to care for the motherless children. The number of children under eighteen left in the care of the 218,000 widowers was 132,000.[10] Such an obligation may indirectly reduce his net income, since he previously received these services without charge. The economic value of the farm wife is immediately apparent, and the farmer must have some substitute if he is to function without serious economic impairment. The farm wife is indispensable to the total enterprise. The wife of the urban white-collar worker, professional man, or businessman has no such direct economic function. The role of the wife in such groups is primarily confined to consumption.

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[8] Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, "Widows and Widowhood," *Statistical Bulletin*, September 1949.

[9] Mortimer Spiegelman, "The Broken Family—Widowhood and Orphanhood," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, November 1936, CLXXXVIII, 117-30.

[10] Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, "Lower Mortality Promotes Family Stability," *op. cit.*

Marriage is a social, as well as an economic, relationship. When these habitual relationships are broken by death, the participants have great difficulty in adjusting to their new status.[11] The resulting frustration is severe and may take interpersonal, emotional, and sexual, in addition to economic, forms. The marital roles exist in reciprocal contacts with the spouse. When the other is suddenly gone, the habit patterns of the bereaved spouse continue, even though the husband or wife is no longer there. The bereaved undergoes a strong emotional shock because his or her personality is still enmeshed in the network of social expectations that comprise the marital roles. The intellectual realization that death is both inevitable and universal cannot dull the shock of the initial loss. The bereaved spouse goes on living with a part of his personality gone beyond recall.[12]

Mourning is the institutionalized process by which the spouse makes the initial adjustment to the new role. The patterns of behavior for the bereaved husband or wife are prescribed by the mores, and the person adopts the appropriate role as defined by his culture. There are, of course, wide variations in the intensity of the grief experienced by different individuals, as well as in the manner in which the grief is shown. Temperamental differences, the importance of religion, and other considerations determine the individual reaction, but even these factors are tempered by cultural definitions. The rituals of the funeral, mourning, and the sympathetic ministrations of neighbors furnish symbolic roles prescribed by the culture that assist in the individual adjustment. Even with these socially-determined aids, the role of the bereaved is a difficult and taxing one.[13]

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[11] Cf. Francis E. Merrill, *Courtship and Marriage* (New York: The Dryden Press, 1949), chap. 16, "Broken Roles: Death and Desertion."

[12] The most extensive available discussion of bereavement is that given by Thomas D. Eliot, "Bereavement: Inevitable but not Insurmountable," *Family, Marriage, and Parenthood*, eds. Becker and Hill, chap. 22.

[13] Cf. also Willard Waller, *The Family*, rev. Reuben Hill (New York: The Dryden Press), chap. 22, "Bereavement: a Crisis of Family Dismemberment."

Desertion and the Broken Family

Desertion is a second form in which the family is disrupted. Desertion is the most informal method of disruption and lacks the finality of death or divorce. Comparatively little is known of the extent of desertion, whereas the basic data on death and divorce are known with considerable accuracy. Desertion is sometimes called "the poor man's divorce," and this description suggests its clandestine nature. When the tensions and conflicts have become acute, some couples start divorce action. Other couples will never consider divorce for religious, moral, or economic reasons. The latter may "solve" their family problems by informally drifting apart, with the husband ordinarily taking the initiative. This informal rupture of the family, wherein one person leaves the bed and/or board of the other, is known as desertion.

The point of overt break varies from one family to another. Some families have greater cohesion than others, which means that they will stay together in the face of conflicts that will disrupt others. Neither desertion nor divorce thus actually "causes" the broken family. These actions are merely the informal and formal recognition of conflicts existing long before the break occurs. The tensions and conflicts that precede desertion and divorce are the real "causes" of these types of family dismemberment. Divorce is the legal recognition that a given marriage has ceased to exist. The formal grounds for divorce, as we shall see, ordinarily bear little relationship to the real causes. Similarly, in the case of desertion the family consensus has been broken by personal and social conflicts long before the deserting spouse takes matters into his own hands.

Desertion is a legal ground for divorce in most states, but most desertions do not end in divorce. There seems to be a trend in recent years toward more desertions ending in divorce,[14] although the majority still do not. Whether for reasons of religion, ignorance of the law, lack of money, or fear of public disapproval, most deserted wives never sue for divorce. Instead, they may continue for the rest of their lives in a state of technical marriage but without any of its financial, social, or affectionate accompaniments. Desertion as a legal prelude to divorce is one phase of the problem of divorce. Desertion as a more or less permanent status is another and more important problem. In the widespread criticism of divorce, desertion is often forgotten, even though both represent common forms of family breakdown.[15]

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[14] Calvin L. Beale, "Increased Divorce Rates among Separated Persons as a Factor in Divorce since 1940," *Social Forces*, October 1950, XXIX, 72-74.

The extent of informal separation, of which desertion is the most important form, has recently been disclosed by a sample survey of the Bureau of the Census. This survey was conducted in April, 1951, and was the first of its kind ever made. The category of "separated" was used to define the marital status of "those with legal separations, those living apart with intentions of obtaining a divorce, and other persons permanently or temporarily estranged from their spouse because of marital discord." [16] At the time of the survey, 1,700,000 persons were in this category, comprising 600,000 men and 1,100,000 women. The discrepancy between the sexes reflects in part the large number of separated men who were in the armed forces and living in barracks, either in the United States or abroad, and hence were not enumerated in the survey. The figures probably also reflect certain differences in reporting their marital status by men and women.[17]

In a previous study, William F. Ogburn commented upon the nature of separation and its implications for the family. In this connection, he pointed out that the term "separation . . . truly implies a broken home, irrespective of whether or not a permanent separation was intended at the time it occurred. It is a broken home and may be even more socially significant than a home broken by divorce or widowhood." [18] The significance of this situation, he continues, results from the loss of mutual association by both partners and the resultant impact upon their happiness and well-being. The children of such families lack the affectionate guidance of the father or mother and may grow up emotionally thwarted. Finally, "a divorced or widowed spouse may remarry, which is not the case with the separated couples. A home broken because of a 'spouse absent' is a significant social concept, whatever may be the reason for the absence."[19]

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[15] Kingsley Davis, "Statistical Perspective on Marriage and Divorce," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, November 1950, CCLXXII, 20.

[16] Bureau of the Census, "Marital Status and Household Characteristics: April, 1951," *Current Population Reports: Population Characteristics*, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

[17] *Ibid.*

[18] William F. Ogburn, "Marital Separations," *American Journal of Sociology*, January 1944, XLIX, 316-23.

The characteristics of separated couples are, furthermore, such that Ogburn infers that separation is similar to divorce in point of incompatibility and permanence, if not in terms of legal recognition. "The characteristics of the separated couples," remarks Ogburn, "in regard to the employment of wives, the scarcity of children, the nativity of the couples, urban-rural residence, and occupations are somewhat like the characteristics of divorced couples."[20] Furthermore, marital separations are relatively higher among nonwhites, in cities, among childless couples, in rapidly growing areas, in the service occupations, and among the low-income groups. In these and other respects, separated and deserted couples are like the divorced. It can therefore be assumed that separation as well as divorce represents a permanent condition of family disruption.

Factors in Desertion

The mobility of our society is an important factor in the widespread practice of desertion. In the period of a single year, from April 1950 to April 1951, some 31 million of the 148 million persons in the country over one year of age had moved at least from one house to another. Of this number, 21 million had moved within a single county and 10 million had migrated from one county to another. This figure of 31 million mobile persons represents approximately 21 per cent of the population, or slightly more than one person in five. Marital status seems to be closely related to mobility. In the year under discussion, 41 per cent of the married men *not* living with their wives had moved, whereas only 21 per cent of those who were living with their wives had done so. Commenting upon this situation, the Bureau of the Census remarks that "The high mobility of men who were 'married, wife absent' seems . . . to reflect the fact that this particular marital situation is often a by-product of mobility."[21]

Husbands find jobs in distant parts of the country and leave their families "temporarily" behind. Most of these initial movements are probably taken in good faith, and the husband intends eventually to send for his wife and children. Many postpone this action for one reason or another, until the husband and wife gradually lose touch with each other. Other deserting husbands leave home with the avowed intention never to return and strike out across the broad expanse of the country in search of employment. Whatever the original motives, the economic opportunities and the traditional acceptance of mobility combine to encourage desertion.

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[19] *Ibid.*, pp. 316-17.

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 323.

[21] Bureau of the Census, "Mobility of the Population for the United States: April 1950 to April 1951," *Current Population Reports: Population Characteristics*, July 14, 1952, Series P-20, No. 39.

Religious factors also indirectly determine the extent of desertion. In the Catholic faith, the central value is the formal preservation of the family, no matter what the conflicts and tensions may be. The Catholic Church takes a categorical stand against divorce, which makes it impossible for the devout practitioner to dissolve his family ties in this fashion. Many take the informal method of desertion to relieve themselves of bonds that have become burdensome. In the absence of statistical evidence for the country as a whole, the extent of this practice is suggested by the high rates of desertion in the "paternal family areas" of the large cities, in which are concentrated large numbers of Catholic families from southern and eastern Europe. The culture which they brought with them from the Old World is strongly opposed to divorce. When combined with ignorance of the law and the lack of money, the religious factor constitutes a formidable preventive against divorce. A high rate of desertion is one answer.[22]

The culture patterns of minority racial groups are further factors in desertion. These patterns reflect the way of life of the minority group. Among Negroes, for example, the rate of desertion is very high, and desertion is the fate of many Negro wives in the urban centers of the North. The percentage of the nonwhite population (composed largely of Negroes) that is married but *not* living with their spouses is much larger than the percentage of the white population in a similar marital status. The over-all percentage for the nonwhite population in April, 1951, was 9 per cent, whereas only 3 per cent of the white population were married but not living with their spouses. Furthermore, some 70 per cent of the nonwhites in this category were reported as "separated," whereas only 41 per cent of the whites not living with their husbands or wives were in this category.[23] The majority of the nonwhites listed as "separated" probably represented cases of desertion.

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[22] Ernest R. Mowrer, "The Trend and Ecology of Family Disintegration in Chicago," *American Sociological Review*, June 1938, III, 344-53.

The cultural patterns of Negro desertion arise in somewhat the following fashion. Negro males are forced by discrimination into occupations that are comparatively marginal and unstable. Many Negro families then perforce become matriarchies. The mother ordinarily works at domestic service, which is considerably more stable and represents a greater degree of occupational security than is possible for the husband. This uncertainty forces the husband into greater mobility, either within the same urban community or from one community to another in search of work.

Many such husbands eventually return to their families. Many others never return, and the mother supports the children as best she can. The disparity between the white and the nonwhite female population in this respect is striking. Among the civilian population as a whole, only 1.8 per cent of all married females over 14 years of age reported themselves as "separated" from their husbands. For the Negro population, 7.5 per cent were listed in this category.[24] Desertion is thus approximately 4 times as prevalent among the nonwhite female population as among the white. In the anonymous world of metropolitan New York, Chicago, Cleveland, and Detroit, many Negro husbands disappear forever from their families.[25]

In a pioneer study of desertion made many years ago, Eubank suggested five general types of deserters on the basis of the conscious and unconscious motives that prompt their action. (a) *The Spurious Deserter*, who attempts to relieve himself of formal responsibility by leaving the care of his family to charitable and relief agencies; (b) *The Gradual Deserter*, who is largely a product of industrial mobility. This type leaves his family to search for work and then gradually loses contact with them; (c) *The Intermittent Husband*, who acts in that capacity only sporadically and often times his desertions to coincide with such family crises as childbirth, unemployment, or acute conflict; (d) *The Ill-Advised Marriage Type*, who married in haste or under conditions not of his own choosing and takes the first opportunity to divest himself of his unwanted ties; (e) *The Last-Resort*

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[23] Bureau of the Census, "Marital Status and Household Characteristics: April, 1951," *Current Population Reports: Population Characteristics, op. cit.*

[24] *Ibid.*, Tables 5, 7.

[25] A vivid depiction of desertion in the urban Negro family is given in Richard Wright's novel, *Native Son* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1940).

Type, who leaves his family only after a succession of conflict situations has convinced him that the marriage can never be successful.[26] A final type of deserter, added by Mowrer, is (f) *The Symbolic Deserter*, whose action symbolizes his emotional conflicts about the marriage situation and who leaves or threatens to leave his family largely as a gesture of self-assertion and a bid for status.[27]

The Social Effects of Desertion

The most important characteristic of desertion is the uncertainty it leaves. The deserted wife may lose all contact with her husband for many years, only to have him suddenly appear and claim his marital rights. The deserting husband may assume that his wife has, after several years, grown tired of waiting and has either initiated divorce proceedings or remarried on the assumption of his death. Both parties to a permanent desertion remain uncertain of their marital status and, hence, cannot remarry with any assurance that they are not committing bigamy. Deserting husbands and deserted wives are left hanging in mid-air, never sure whether they are divorced, widowed, or permanently separated. The family continues in technical legal solidarity, but the emotional and social security is lacking.

The majority of the 600,000 men and 1,100,000 women reported as separated because of marital discord are doubtless operating in this anomalous position. As noted by the Bureau of the Census, some of these persons are in the process of obtaining a divorce or are legally separated with no intention of reuniting the marriage bond. But the majority of these 1,700,000 persons are married but are extremely uncertain as to whether they will ever live with their husbands or wives again.[28] This status is irregular in terms of social relationships, even though it may be regular in the eyes of the law and the Church. Actually, the wife is married, but she has no husband. The children are members of a family, but they have no father (or mother). The husband has certain moral and legal responsibilities, but he has no home or family.

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[26] Earle E. Eubank, *A Study of Family Desertion* (Chicago: Department of Public Welfare, 1916), pp. 37-49.

[27] Harriet R. Mowrer, *Personality Adjustment and Domestic Discord* (New York: American Book Company, 1935), p. 221.

[28] Bureau of the Census, "Marital Status and Household Characteristics," *Current Population Reports: Population Characteristics*, *op. cit.*

Since desertion is primarily confined to the lower-income groups, economic problems loom large for the deserted wife and children. If the wife has never previously worked outside the home, the shock of having to provide for herself and children may be precipitous. Such adjustments are not made over night, even with full employment, and the deserted wife may not be able to find work. She is therefore often dependent upon private charity or public relief, neither of which may be immediately available. Since she is not a widow, she is not eligible for a widow's pension. Since she is not divorced, she does not receive alimony. Often she does not receive any economic support whatever from her husband. One of the original reasons for his desertion may have been his desire to evade the support of his family.

The deserted wife is faced with a variety of problems growing out of her sudden economic crisis. Even if she is successful in finding work, the return is seldom as great as that to which she was accustomed. Women ordinarily receive lower wages than men, even for similar work. To supplement the mother's wages, the children may be forced to leave school and go to work themselves, at the cost of further education and often at the risk of unwholesome employment. Younger children are deprived of the mother's care, with the resulting implications for juvenile delinquency and other forms of adolescent maladjustment. The mother may perforce resort to the other stratagems of families in a depressed economic state—borrowing, returning to the parental home, placing the child in a foster home, or even entering irregular sexual unions. The only basis upon which the deserted mother can establish a sexual relationship is an extralegal one, because she is unable to join a possible mate in lawful wedlock.

The psychological aspects of this truncated relationship are also important, for the children may acquire attitudes toward their father ranging from disillusionment to overt hostility. These feelings may be even more bitter than after divorce, since the anomalous legal status of the mother may add to the feeling against the father. The children of a divorced family may believe that the father has done his best in the face of a difficult situation, a belief that could hardly be entertained by children of a deserted family. This pattern of family life in their most impressionable years is not an ideal foundation for their own subsequent married lives. The children are conscious that their family life is abnormal, that their father is not dead, divorced, or absent on business but has disappeared in some vaguely clandestine and disgraceful fashion. The role which they play in their own groups is colored by their feeling of shame toward their family. Under such conditions, it is a wise and tolerant mother who can form the attitudes of her children on any basis other than shame or hatred for their father.

The effects upon the deserting husband should not be overlooked. The act of deserting a wife, particularly with dependent children, is highly reprehensible in our society. The person doing so loses prestige in the eyes of the group and in his own eyes as well. Even though his act is unknown to others in his new environment, it is not unknown to his own conscience. His conception of himself deteriorates under the permanent conditions of desertion, for he cannot rid himself completely of the realization that he has evaded one of his fundamental obligations. When his conception of himself is seriously shaken, it is difficult to maintain a stable life organization. Drink, prostitution, and general uncertainty may characterize the deserting husband. He may be able to escape from his wife, his children, his local community, his friends, and even his most casual acquaintances. He cannot escape from himself.[29]

The hope that perennially springs in the human breast doubtless persuades many deserted wives and deserting husbands that the conflicts producing the original desertion may somehow be patched up and the marriage resumed on a happier basis. Reconciliation is often attempted by religious authorities, courts, or social service agencies on the ground that the family should be kept intact at all costs. When the desertion is based upon superficial temperamental difficulties or temporary behavior crises, such efforts may be successful. When the tensions and conflicts are more fundamental, reconciliation may not be successful or the situation permanently bettered by an artificial reunion. The definition of the situation in terms of social values is important in this consideration. The supreme value may be the formal solidarity of the family. If this is the case, then reconciliation should be carried through at all costs. If the chief value is personal happiness, the reconciliation of two persons with hopelessly different standards, temperaments, behavior patterns, and social aspirations may be a doubtful contribution to social welfare.

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[29] Cf. Jacob T. Zukerman, "A Socio-Legal Approach to Family Desertion," *Marriage and Family Living*, Summer 1950, XII, 83-84.

The Nature of Divorce

Divorce is the symbol of family disruption. When the average person speaks of the "breakdown of the family," he is generally thinking of divorce, although desertion, separation, and death combine to take a far greater toll. Death is ever present in the abstract, although its stark reality is not appreciated until it strikes. Furthermore, death is sanctioned by the mores, which provide appropriate forms of behavior for the bereaved husband, wife, and children. No such sanction exists for the family broken by divorce, since it is so recent that the mores have not evolved approved patterns for the participants or attitudes for their friends and relatives. Divorce is still a somewhat disreputable form of family disruption, with highly charged value judgments that cause people to view it as a serious social problem. When the problem is discussed, these value judgments color the outlook of the participants and obscure many of the facts. It is in these terms, therefore, that divorce symbolizes family disorganization as a form of activity of which a large number of persons disapprove.

Divorce does not "cause" family disruption.[30] Various well-intentioned persons fulminate from pulpit, editorial page, or classroom concerning the "divorce evil" and its dire effects upon the modern family. Divorce is not an incarnate force, devastating the family like a typhoon or tidal wave. Divorce is not a force at all, nor does it cause family disruption, except in the most formal logical sense. Divorce is merely the legal recognition by the appropriate civil authorities that a husband and wife wish to terminate their relationship. The tensions and conflicts that have brought about this state of affairs have all occurred before the couple has anything to do with divorce. Divorce is a convenient symbol of this accumulated discontent, but the causes of family disruption must be found elsewhere.

Divorce is an expensive and complicated process, involving knowledge of the law, at least a minimum of funds, and above all a strong desire to terminate the marriage, even at the cost of social disapproval and emotional shock. Marriages may be extremely unhappy, but they may lack one or all of the factors that induce the individuals to dissolve them. Other marriages may be happier and better adjusted, but at the same time may contain a strong drive for a change of partners. The latter marriages may terminate in the divorce courts whereas the former may remain legally intact for life.

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[30] Cf. Mabel A. Elliott, "Divorce Legislation and Family Instability," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, November 1950, CCLXXII, 145-47.

Divorce, then, does not cause the disruption of the family any more than the laws against bastardy cause the birth of illegitimate children. Both are definitions of particular situations whereby society recognizes that certain sequences of human behavior have taken place. The number of marriages annually broken by divorce therefore reflects the society in which these marriages operate in the same way that the family reflects the other facets of its social setting. Given the expectations of our society and the changes undergone in the last 150 years by all its segments and institutions, the high rate of divorce becomes clearer.[31] The process of family disruption through divorce assumes a more natural form, growing inevitably out of a combination of social circumstances. This point of view attempts to transcend the value judgments that we all bring to an institution as intimate as the family. We have a high divorce rate because the circumstances of our society bring it about, not because any wicked group of men have deliberately willed it so. Stated in these terms, the proposition becomes the baldest of platitudes. To many people, however, this homely truth has not yet struck home.

Divorce and the Changing Family [32]

The modern family no longer possesses many of the solid reasons for existence that formerly made it a central agency of society. One by one, the functions that the family has traditionally performed have been taken over by some other institution—public or private—a process leaving the modern urban family stripped of many of its basic reasons for being. This progressive emasculation has taken place as a result of profound and unplanned social changes that have extensively modified the world in which the family functions. Only in this general context can the modern family be realistically considered.

The family is becoming more an erotic relationship—using erotic in the broad sense of procreation, affection, and romantic love. The factors that impel any given couple to marry are largely romantic, as are those which keep them together before conjugal affection appears. The day has passed when every individual was absolutely dependent upon the family for his livelihood, protection, education, recreation, and religious instruction. The old-fashioned ties were solid; the individual could not get along without them. In their stead he now has a congeries of feelings which, because of their high emotional content, are considerably more unstable than the powerful ties grouped about making a living, building a home, worshiping God, and educating his children. In place of the institutional relationship, we have one that is essentially individual.

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[31] Kingsley Davis, "Statistical Perspective on Marriage and Divorce," *op. cit.*, p. 17.

[32] Cf. Carle C. Zimmerman, "The Family and Social Change," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, November 1950, CCLXXII, 22-29.

This hypothesis suggests a corollary based upon the predominance of the erotic element. Given the increasing dependence upon this factor, the stability of the individual family will continue to decline and the probability of divorce will rise. The historical development of the family in western Europe and America reflected the stability of its social setting. This stability has become the norm for subsequent family behavior, and any departure therefrom is considered a social problem. The earlier social conditions were such as inevitably to vest many of the central functions of human life in the family. These conditions have changed, and the family has changed with them. The old norms still survive, however, even though they are no longer applicable to the new situation. In the society of the present and the future, a new norm may be evolving, based upon a higher degree of instability and a more frequent rate of divorce.

The rise in the divorce rate in recent decades is generally assumed to be a sign of the disorganization of the family and hence a social problem.[33] This interpretation is true if we define the family as a relationship absolutely indissoluble for life. The majority undoubtedly define the indissoluble family as the norm, and divorce as a departure therefrom. But normal and abnormal are matters of degree. As the divorce rate remains high, divorce will progressively lose its historic "abnormality" and assume a new "normality." This statement is not a cynical play on words, but a sober acknowledgment of fact. The family of the future will not be one in which the individual will invariably live until death with the bride or bridegroom of his youth. This statement is applicable not merely to the future family. It is in no small measure true of the contemporary family.

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[33] Francis E. Merrill, *et al.*, *Social Problems* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1950), chap. 11.

This interpretation should not be construed as an apology for divorce or a plea for more and better divorces. We shall consider some of the costs of divorce to the individuals most closely concerned. Many of these costs are far from pleasant, social values being what they are.[34] This interpretation is rather a statement of a fact that is obvious to anyone who stops to mull over the divorce statistics of the past fifty years. The rise in divorce is one of the penalties for the democratization of the family, a process with which the majority of persons are at least in theoretical agreement. Even if we do not agree in principle as to the desirability of such democracy, there is very little we can do about it. Democracy is with us to stay. As conceived in our society, one of the basic tenets of democracy is individualism. Individualism leads to romantic marriage, which with clear logic leads to romantic divorce. To this series of ideological factors must be added the socio-economic factor that the family has become—through the fault of no person, group of persons, political party, religious denomination, or combination thereof—increasingly dependent upon the affectional function. When we consider this formidable array of social changes, the probability of divorce becomes clearer.

Forms of Divorce

There are two principal forms of divorce in our society, although one is so much more common that it virtually obscures the other in popular thinking. When the word divorce is mentioned, the average person thinks of the usual type known as *absolute divorce* (*a vinculo matrimonii*). Here the marriage is completely dissolved, together with all the rights and obligations related thereto. Following the decree of absolute divorce, husband and wife resume the status of single persons and are legally free to remarry. In those centuries when the Universal Church was dominant in the Western world, it was logical that, since marriage was regarded as an indissoluble relationship, there could be no divorce in the modern sense. The only possibility for the complete dissolution of the marriage "bond" was for the Canonical courts to declare that, on account of some impediment existing at the time of marriage, no valid marriage had ever existed. This declaration of nullity is comparable to present-day annulment.

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[34] Cf. William J. Goode, "Problems in Postdivorce Adjustment," *American Sociological Review*, June 1949, XIV, 394-401.

The second and less common form of divorce is variously known as legal separation, partial divorce, limited divorce, or judicial separation. The Latin terms that have survived to characterize it are a *mensa et toro*. This kind of divorce is legally possible in more than half of the American jurisdictions. In most respects, the grounds for obtaining it and the legal procedures involved are the same as in absolute divorce.[35] The essential characteristic of partial divorce is that the marriage is not dissolved legally and hence the individuals are not free to marry again.

This form of halfway divorce, in which the individuals live apart and the wife may receive support from the husband, is something of an anomaly at the present time. It can be understood only in the light of its historical setting as another solution of the Ecclesiastical Courts to an impossible marital situation when marriage was an indissoluble union. Since marriage partook of the divine nature, one party to the union must have committed a grave sin. The one against whom the sin had been committed was therefore to be considered blameless. Until recently the wife was dependent, economically and otherwise, on the husband. Hence the Courts could decree that husband and wife were to live apart, although still married in the eyes of the law and the Church, and that the wife should receive separate maintenance.

Limited divorce comprises only a small part of the divorce actions in the country. The practice has remained on the statutes in some states as a concession to those religious groups that regard marriage as indissoluble. From the secular standpoint, the major justification for limited divorce is the possibility that it will promote reconciliation and hence maintain the physical integrity of the family. A number of the states that grant such decrees also have a provision for reconciliation. In a few states, there is a provision that, in case of failure to achieve reconciliation after a specified time, the limited divorce decree is merged into one of absolute divorce.[36]

A divorce procedure that is sometimes confused with limited divorce is the interlocutory decree, or decree *nisi*. This decree accompanies the absolute divorce proceedings in approximately one-third of American jurisdictions. In essence, it is a preliminary decree that does not become final until the lapse of a certain time, varying from one month to one year. In practical terms, this means that an interval must elapse between the initial court action and the final dissolution of the marital bond. Only with the final decree are the individuals given single status and with it the freedom to remarry.

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[35] Chester G. Vernier, *American Family Laws* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1932), II, 341 ff.

[36] *Ibid.*, pp. 348-49.

Such a procedure has certain theoretical advantages. Among these are: (a) the discouraging of hasty divorce to marry someone else; (b) the possible reconciliation before the decree becomes final; and (c) the uncovering of any fraud or collusion in the divorce process.[37] Most of these alleged advantages remain only theoretical, however, since divorce and remarriage can often be obtained simply by crossing state lines. Furthermore, the discovery of fraud or collusion is ordinarily avoided by the courts, since they are reasonably certain that they could find collusion in most divorce actions if they examined the evidence.

In this chapter, we have examined the major factors that bring about the physical disruption of the family. These factors are death, desertion (and separation), and divorce. Contrary to the popular impression, the rate for all forms of family disruption has decreased, rather than increased, in the sixty years from 1890 to 1950. This decrease has reflected the decline in the mortality rates, which has more than compensated for the increase in divorce over the recent decades. We have examined the impact of death upon the family and indicated that, in any one year, death is the most important single cause of family disruption.

Desertion and separation are two little-known but important forms of family disorganization, whose incidence and implications are obscured by the lack of public knowledge. In the final section of the chapter, we turned to divorce as the third type of family disorganization, whose importance in the public mind far overshadows death and desertion. Divorce has become the symbol of family disorganization and a major social problem, inasmuch as it (divorce) threatens the basic social value embodied in the indissolubility of the family. In the following chapter, we shall indicate the major trends in divorce and shall consider the basic processes whereby it occurs in a society that has become increasingly characterized by social disorganization.

[37] *Ibid.*, p. 152.

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THE BROKEN FAMILY: THE DIVORCE PROCESS

It is one thing to decide that a marriage is not a success; it is quite another to carry this decision through to a divorce. Many couples lack the psychic energy to disrupt their marriage. Others lack the money or the legal knowledge. Others are restrained by religious taboos. Still others are inhibited by fear of public opinion or the possible repercussions upon their business or profession. Many take matters informally into their own hands and desert, thus effectively breaking the social continuity of the family while maintaining the legal fiction. In short, many families that are otherwise hopelessly disorganized do not take the final step of formal dissolution. The disorganization of these families does not constitute as pressing a social problem as divorce, since society is largely unaware of the condition. Unless open desertion or divorce has taken place, social values have not been overtly questioned.[1]

The Divorce Process

Even after the couple have decided upon a divorce, the matter is not ended there. In terms of the romantic complex, the proper procedure would presumably be to appear before a sympathetic judge, explain their plight, and ask for a divorce. Such a solution would be too simple. Any couple naïve enough to proceed in this fashion would find their case thrown out of court and themselves accused of collusion.

Collusion may be broadly defined as "any agreement between the parties by which they endeavor to obtain a divorce by an imposition on the court."[2] This imposition may take three general forms: "(1) by the commission of an offense for the purpose of obtaining a divorce, (2) by the introduction of false evidence of an offense not actually committed, and (3) by suppression of a valid defense."[3] Many couples actually do reach a tacit agreement to "impose" upon the court and hence are technically guilty of collusion. As long as they and their lawyers maintain a decent reticence in court, however, no questions are asked, and the divorce is generally granted. The judge is fully aware of these extralegal agreements, but he is also aware that continued marriage cannot be forced upon unwilling parties. He therefore tends to make the best of a bad bargain and grant the divorce.[4]

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[1] Cf. Willard Waller, *The Family*, rev. Reuben Hill (New York: The Dryden Press, 1951), chap. 23, "Divorce and Alienation Crises."

In the face of the difficulties to divorce by mutual consent, the conflicting parties are forced to seek other legal sanctions. They therefore consult a lawyer to discover the most innocuous grounds for divorce in their state. The lawyer prepares legal evidence that will justify the judge's granting a divorce on such grounds as the state statutes provide. All divorces do not come about in this relatively amicable fashion. Many suits are entered because the husband actually *has* deserted his wife, inflicted various physical and psychological cruelties upon her, or committed adultery with one or more persons. The law gives recourse to injured persons from such forms of cruel and inhuman treatment, and many divorces are granted on this basis.

There is no way of knowing, however, how many divorces are granted on fictitious and how many on *bona fide* grounds. The nature of divorce proceedings renders such knowledge impossible to obtain. Any conclusions based upon the number and percentages of divorces granted on the various legal grounds, therefore, should be made with caution. The behavior measured by such data is of a special legal character, which often bears only an indirect relationship to life.

The "real" reasons for the disorganization of the family by divorce are the tensions and conflicts existing between its members. These elements have been considered above and often bear only a remote relationship to the legal grounds on which the divorce is granted. Marriage is a civil relationship, however, in which society has an intimate interest. Society also maintains an active concern with the conditions under which marriage is formally dissolved. Pertinent statistical information is noted by the various jurisdictions, with such data as the causes of divorce, the party to whom granted, whether or not alimony was awarded and to whom, and similar matters. Such insight as we have upon family disorganization on a mass scale is perforce largely drawn from such information, which necessarily ignores many of the basic reasons for family disorganization.

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[2] Helen I. Clarke, *Social Legislation* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1940), p. 126.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] An estimated 95 per cent of all divorces are uncontested in the courts. Cf. Morris L. Ernst and David Loth, *For Better or Worse* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1952), p. 7.

A further difficulty in interpreting family behavior from the statistics of divorce is the heterogeneous character of the information. With the 48 states and the District of Columbia having separate definitions of grounds for divorce, the United States has the most confusing mass of divorce legislation in the world. The anomalies of states' rights reach a high point in the wide varieties of conditions under which divorce can and cannot be obtained in the different sovereign jurisdictions. New York allows absolute divorce only on the ground of adultery; New Yorkers desiring a divorce must either perform various symbolic rituals which the court will accept as evidence of adultery or go elsewhere. Other states are more lenient both in the matter of defining the length of time necessary to establish residence for divorce purposes and in grounds therefor.

The exigencies of the law also make for certain obvious absurdities in divorce statistics. Since divorce in New York State can be granted only on the ground of adultery, this is the sole ground that appears in the statistics. To infer that New Yorkers are customarily more adulterous than, say, Pennsylvanians is to indicate the difficulty of drawing any definitive conclusions from divorce statistics. States that define the duration of desertion in short terms will have a larger proportion of divorces granted on this ground than will states requiring five years or more to establish the fact. Similarly, states with vague or ambiguous definitions of cruelty will have an inordinate number of cruel and inhuman husbands, judging from the divorce figures. The point need not be further labored to indicate that actual family behavior and behavior measured in the divorce courts constitute two different phenomena. This does not mean that the statistics of divorce have no value in interpreting family behavior. The behavior that such statistics measure, however, is of a highly special nature.

Trends in Divorce Legislation

With these necessary provisos, we may consider briefly the principal legal grounds on which divorces are granted in the United States. Data for the nation as a whole are lacking. The National Office of Vital Statistics of the Federal Security Agency collects such information as there is, but only seventeen states are cited in their recent summaries.[5] Furthermore, the definitions of the various grounds for divorce, as noted, are subject to such wide variations that any valid generalizations are difficult. We may indicate, however, certain very general tendencies that are apparent in contemporary divorce legislation in order to indicate the broad trends in this field.[6]

1. *The Uniformity in Grounds for Divorce.* An increasing uniformity in grounds for divorce is apparent among the several states. All the jurisdictions are faced with a growing similarity of social situations, which give rise to similar legislative procedures. Hence the majority of states grant divorce on certain grounds, however much the interpretations may differ from one court to another. Among these grounds are: cruelty, desertion, nonsupport, adultery, habitual drunkenness, and conviction and imprisonment for a felony. We shall examine the nature of these grounds below; we are merely interested in this context in establishing the fact of uniformity.

2. *The Increase in Leniency in Divorce Legislation.* This trend is apparent in the extension of the grounds allowed as the basis for divorce. Certain jurisdictions, for example, allow "voluntary separation" as a possible ground, and others have reduced the period of time necessary to establish desertion. Other states (still few in number) have introduced incompatibility as a ground. This trend has developed slowly, however, since it represents a sharp break with the traditional concept that one party must "injure" the other in order to get a divorce. South Carolina, which was until recently the only state that did not allow divorce on any ground whatever, now authorizes it on the grounds of adultery, desertion, habitual drunkenness, and wilful neglect.

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[5] Federal Security Agency, National Office of Vital Statistics, "Statistics on Divorces and Annulments: Specified States, 1949," *Vital Statistics-Special Reports-National Summaries*, August 3, 1951, Vol. 36, No. 7.

[6] The following is adapted from Mabel A. Elliott, "Divorce Legislation and Family Instability," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, November 1950, CCLXXII, 134-47.

3. *The Increase in Restriction in Divorce Legislation.* The complexity of social change is indicated by the fact that, concurrently with this increase in leniency, there is also a discernible increase in restriction in certain respects and certain jurisdictions. An example of restriction is the incorporation in approximtely one-third of the states of the interlocutory decree, or *decree nisi,* which does not become final until after one year has elapsed. Other states have introduced waiting periods varying from one month to one year before the divorce becomes final. In this way, it is hoped to reduce the number of hasty divorces and bring about a possible reconciliation before the decree becomes final.

4. *The Commercialization of Divorce.* A final general tendency is the growing commercialization of divorce. The divorce mill of Reno, Nevada is the best known of such flourishing commercial ventures. Other states, notably Florida, Idaho, and Arkansas, have adopted short residential requirements in an obvious attempt to capitalize upon the profitable business of migratory divorce. The famed winter climate of Florida has combined with a ninety-day residence requirement to provide a formidable rival for Nevada in this respect. We shall consider migratory divorce below; we wish here to call attention to its apparent increase.[7]

Grounds for Divorce

We may survey briefly the principal grounds for divorce, with a view to indicating their nature and the variety of definitions given to them. Complete data on the proportion of divorces granted on the various grounds are lacking,[8] but cruelty is clearly the most important single ground, with desertion next. Together, these two are grounds in more than 80 per cent of the divorces granted, with all the other grounds comprising the balance.[9] Married couples seek the divorce courts for reasons of incompatibility, ceasing to love each other, falling in love with someone else, failure of the marriage to live up to expectations, plus the various tensions, personal and social, to which this relationship is subject. Most of these real reasons do not constitute acceptable legal grounds for divorce. Hence the couple must employ grounds that are legal in their particular jurisdiction.[10]

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[7] *Ibid.*, pp. 134-37.

[8] Fragmentary data are given for divorces and annulments by cause in 17 states. Cf. Federal Security Agency, National Office of Vital Statistics, *op. cit.*, Table 3.

[9] Cf. Bureau of the Census, "Divorce Statistics," *Vital Statistics-Special Reports*, June 9, 1943, Vol. 17, No. 25.

1. *Cruelty*. Approximately half of all divorces involve the ground of cruelty. This is the most popular as well as the most amorphous ground. The statutes speak of "cruelty," "extreme cruelty," or "cruel and inhuman treatment," terms that do not admit of precise definition. Instead of attempting a blanket definition of legal cruelty, the court generally tries to determine whether or not the facts in each case constitute cruelty. A few states incorporate "mental cruelty" as grounds, although the definition of this behavior is even less precise. The usual criterion in mental cruelty is whether physical injury has been done to the plaintiff.[11] This might be called the psychosomatic theory of cruelty, whereby physical difficulties are allegedly induced by psychological means.

2. *Desertion*. Desertion is the second most common ground. All states except New York and North Carolina grant divorces for desertion, with the period ranging from six months to five years. Certain elements must be present before desertion constitutes *bona fide* grounds for divorce. These prerequisites include: "(1) a cessation of cohabitation, (2) desertion for the period prescribed by statute, (3) an intention to abandon, (4) want of consent on the part of the party abandoned, and (5) unjustifiable abandonment." [12] There is no all-inclusive definition of desertion, and the court decides in each individual case whether or not the behavior may be so defined.

3. *Neglect*. This ground is variously called "neglect," "nonsupport," or "failure to provide." It is one of the several grounds that, after cruelty and desertion, comprise the balance of divorces. More than half of the jurisdictions consider this a ground for divorce, provided the husband has "wilfully" failed to support the wife, even though financially able to do so. If illness, physical disability, or unemployment make support impossible, the wife is not thereby entitled to sue the husband for divorce.[13] Furthermore, if the wife is able to support herself through independent means or gainful employment, neglect by the husband is not considered sufficient grounds.

4. *Adultery*. Adultery is "the voluntary sexual intercourse of a mar-

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[10] Mabel A. Elliott, *op. cit.*, pp. 145-46.

[11] Clarke, *Social Legislation*, p. 121.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 122.

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 124.

ried man or woman with a person other than the offender's spouse." [14] This is the sole ground admitted in every state, including New York State, where it is the only ground. The attendant social approbrium is such, however, that only a small proportion (probably less than 5 per cent) of all divorces are granted on the ground of adultery. Evidence of adultery differs between courts, but it is generally stated that it must be of a "clear and positive nature." The clearest evidence is obviously the apprehension of the guilty pair *in flagrante dilecto*, but "presumptive" evidence also suffices. The opportunity to commit the act combined with a demonstrable inclination thereto constitutes presumptive evidence that the act was committed. A man who spends the night in a hotel with a woman not his wife is thereby considered to have had both the opportunity and the inclination to commit adultery.[15]

5. *Drunkenness*. This is the only additional ground that comprises more than 1 per cent of the total cases. Although clearly difficult to define accurately, a workable concept of drunkenness stresses both its degree and habitual character. Persons who go on occasional sprees do not qualify for such an accusation, nor do those who drink habitually but moderately. To constitute grounds for divorce, the drunkenness must be both *habitual* and *excessive*; the exact nature of these states is a matter of definition, but the general concept is sufficiently clear for working purposes.[16]

Trends in Divorce

In the year 1867, the Bureau of the Census reported a total of 9,937 divorces in the United States, with a rate of approximately 0.3 divorces per 1,000 of the population. In 1946, the same agency estimated a total of 610,000 divorces and a rate of 4.3 per 1,000 of the population. Both the number and the rate for 1946 were the highest on record.[17] In 1951, the last year for which figures are available, the number of divorces stood at 371,000 and the rate at 2.4 per 1,000 of the population. In the five years from 1947 to 1951 inclusive, the number and rate showed a continuous drop with each successive year, until the rate in 1951 was 44 per cent lower than that in 1946.[18] Irrespective of the short-time fluctuations, however, the change from less than 0.5 divorces per 1,000 population to 2.4 per 1,000 population represents perhaps the most spectacular single statistic describing the changing status of the family. These general trends are shown in Table 15 and Figure 8.

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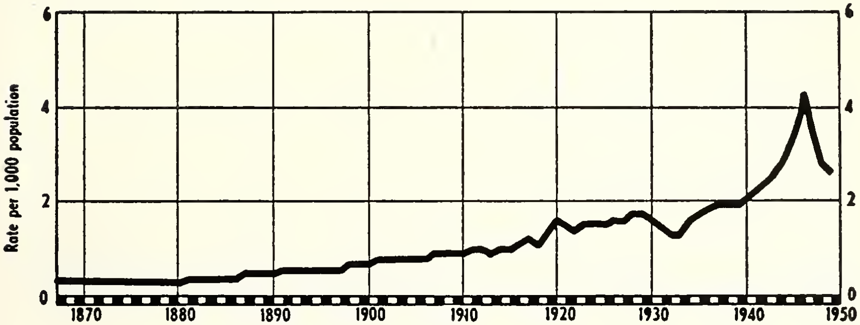
[14] *Ibid.*, p. 120.

[15] *Ibid.*

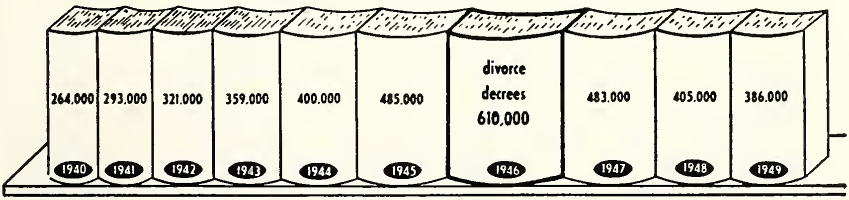
[16] *Ibid.*, p. 124.

[17] Federal Security Agency, National Office of Vital Statistics, "Summary of Marriage and Divorce Statistics: United States, 1949," *Vital Statistics-Special Reports*, June 5, 1951, Vol. 36, No. 2, Table 4.

The divorce rate has been climbing for years



However, the number of divorces has decreased since the all-time high in 1946



Source: Midcentury White House Conference on Children and Youth, CHILDREN AND YOUTH AT THE MIDCENTURY. *Raleigh, North Carolina: Health Publications Institute, Inc., 1951.*

Fig. 8.

This change in the divorce rate in the United States is not an isolated phenomenon. It is part of a trend all over the civilized world and reflects such massive social changes as increasing urbanization, the growing independence of women, two world wars, a worldwide depression, the declining influence of the local community, the acceleration of social mobility, the growing cult of happiness in

[18] Federal Security Agency, National Office of Vital Statistics, *Press Release,* July 9, 1952.

Table 15

DIVORCES AND CRUDE DIVORCE RATES: UNITED STATES, 1867–1951 [19]

(Includes reported annulments. Rates per 1,000 estimated midyear population)

YEAR	Estimated midyear population [20]	DIVORCES		YEAR	Estimated midyear population [20]	DIVORCES	
		Number	Rate			Number	Rate
1951	....	371,000	2.4	1909	90,491,525	79,671	0.9
1950	....	385,144	2.5	1908	88,708,976	76,852	0.9
1949	148,558,000	397,000	2.7	1907	87,000,271	76,571	0.9
1948	146,045,000	408,000	2.8	1906	85,436,556	72,062	0.8
1947	143,375,000	483,000	3.4	1905	83,819,666	67,976	0.8
1946	141,398,000	610,000	4.3	1904	82,164,974	66,199	0.8
1945	139,934,000	485,000	3.5	1903	80,632,152	64,925	0.8
1944	138,390,000	400,000	2.9	1902	79,160,196	61,480	0.8
1943	136,719,000	359,000	2.6	1901	77,585,128	60,984	0.8
1942	134,831,000	321,000	2.4	1900	76,094,134	55,751	0.7
1941	133,377,000	293,000	2.2	1899	74,798,612	51,437	0.7
1940	132,114,000	264,000	2.0	1898	73,493,926	47,849	0.7
1939	130,879,718	251,000	1.9	1897	72,189,240	44,699	0.6
1938	129,824,939	244,000	1.9	1896	70,884,554	42,937	0.6
1937	128,824,829	249,000	1.9	1895	69,579,868	40,387	0.6
1936	128,053,180	236,000	1.8	1894	68,275,182	37,568	0.6
1935	127,250,232	218,000	1.7	1893	66,970,496	37,468	0.6
1934	126,373,773	204,000	1.6	1892	65,665,810	36,579	0.6
1933	125,578,763	165,000	1.3	1891	64,361,124	35,540	0.6
1932	124,840,471	164,241	1.3	1890	63,056,438	33,461	0.5

1931	124,039,648	188,003	1.5	1889	61,775,121	31,735	0.5
1930	123,076,741	195,961	1.6	1888	60,495,927	28,669	0.5
1929	121,769,939	205,876	1.7	1887	59,216,733	27,919	0.5
1928	120,501,115	200,176	1.7	1886	57,937,540	25,535	0.4
1927	119,038,062	196,292	1.6	1885	56,658,347	23,472	0.4
1926	117,399,225	184,678	1.6	1884	55,379,154	22,994	0.4
1925	115,831,963	175,449	1.5	1883	54,099,961	23,198	0.4
1924	114,113,463	170,952	1.5	1882	52,820,768	22,112	0.4
1923	111,949,945	165,096	1.5	1881	51,541,575	20,762	0.4
1922	110,054,778	148,815	1.4	1880	50,262,382	19,663	0.4
1921	108,541,489	159,580	1.5	1879	49,208,194	17,083	0.3
1920	106,466,420	170,505	1.6	1878	48,174,461	16,089	0.3
1919	105,062,747	141,527	1.3	1877	47,140,727	15,687	0.3
1918	104,549,886	116,254	1.1	1876	46,106,994	14,800	0.3
1917	103,413,743	121,564	1.2	1875	45,073,260	14,212	0.3
1916	101,965,984	114,000	1.1	1874	44,039,527	13,989	0.3
				1873	43,005,794	13,156	0.3
1915	100,549,013	104,298	1.0	1872	41,972,060	12,390	0.3
1914	99,117,567	100,584	1.0	1871	40,938,327	11,586	0.3
1913	97,226,814	91,307	0.9	1870	39,904,593	10,962	0.3
1912	95,331,300	94,318	1.0	1869	39,050,729	10,939	0.3
1911	93,867,814	89,219	1.0	1868	38,213,216	10,150	0.3
1910	92,406,536	83,045	0.9	1867	37,375,703	9,937	0.3

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[19] Federal Security Agency, National Office of Vital Statistics, "Summary of Marriage and Divorce Statistics: United States, 1949," Vital Statistics—Special Reports, June 5, 1951, Vol. 36, No. 2, Table 4; also Federal Security Agency, National Office of Vital Statistics, *Press Release*, July 9, 1952.

[20] Comparable population base figures for 1950 and 1951 not available.

marriage—and many other social, economic, philosophical, and ideological changes that have convulsed the Western world in recent decades.[21] Hence this change is not an exclusively American phenomenon, but is rather a characteristic, in varying degrees, of all countries that have been influenced by urban-industrial civilization.

The general postwar trend throughout the Western world has approximated that of the United States. The war and immediate postwar years saw the divorce rate rise to the highest level in history, as the breakdown in many individual marriages both accompanied and followed the convulsions of total war. The years from approximately 1947 to 1951 saw a decline from the record figures of 1945–1946, although in most countries the rates did not return to their prewar levels. The divorce rates per 1,000 of the population in selected countries from 1900 to 1950 are shown in Table 16. Despite the increases in other countries, the United States still retains the dubious distinction of having the highest divorce rate of any nation in the world.[22]

In several European countries, the rate of divorce increased very rapidly between the prewar average for 1935–1939 and that for 1950. The liberalization of the divorce laws in England and Wales since 1940 combined with the marital disorganization accompanying World War II to bring about an extremely heavy increase between 1935–1939 and 1947. The rate per 1,000 of the population in England and Wales in 1935–1939 was 0.1, whereas in 1947 it had increased to 1.4. The rate subsequently declined to 0.7 in 1950, but even this figure represented a 700 per cent increase from the prewar level. France also showed a sharp increase, from 0.6 per 1,000 of the population in 1935–1939 to a postwar high of 1.4 in 1947 and 0.8 in 1950, with the latter figure still substantially above the prewar level.[23]

Among the Scandinavian countries, Sweden showed an increase from 0.5 per 1,000 of the population in 1935–1939 to 1.1 in 1950, or more than 100 per cent. There was no postwar decline in either Sweden or Norway, and the rate in both of those countries continued

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[21] Kingsley Davis, "Statistical Perspective on Marriage and Divorce," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, November 1950, CCLXXII, 17-18.

[22] Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, "Postwar Divorce Rates Here and Abroad," *Statistical Bulletin*, June 1952.

[23] *Ibid.*

Table 16

DIVORCES PER 1,000 POPULATION IN SELECTED COUNTRIES, 1900 to 1950[24]

Country	1900–1904	1905–1909	1910–1914	1915–1919	1920–1924	1925–1929	1930–1934	1935–1939	1940–1944	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950†
North and South America															
United States	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.5	1.6	1.5	1.8	2.4	3.5	4.4	3.4	2.9	2.6	2.5
Canada	0	0	0	0	.1	.1	.1	.2	.3	.4	.6	.7	.5	.4	.4
Dominican Republic	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	.2	.2	.4	.4	.4	.5	.4	.4
Guatemala	*	*	*	*	*	*	0	.1	.1	.1	.1	.1	.1	.1	.1
Mexico	0	0	0	0	0	.1	.2	.2	.3	.4	.4	.4	.3	.3	.3
Puerto Rico	*	*	*	*	*	*	§ 1.6	§ 1.0	1.4	1.6	1.9	1.7	1.5	1.6	1.6
Venezuela	*	*	*	*	0	0	0	.1	.1	.2	.1	.2	2.0	.1	.1
Europe															
Austria	0	0	0	*	*	*	*	.3	§ .9	.7	1.9	1.9	.2	1.8	1.5
Belgium	.1	.1	§ .2	*	.4	.3	.3	.4	.3	.4	.7	.8	.8	.7	.6
Czechoslovakia	*	*	*	*	.4	.4	.4	.4	§ .4	.6	1.0	.9	1.0	*	*
Denmark	.2	.3	.3	.3	.5	.6	.7	.9	1.1	1.4	1.8	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.6
England and Wales	0	0	0	0	.1	.1	.1	.1	.2	.4	.7	1.4	1.0	.8	.7
Finland	0	.1	.1	.1	.2	.2	.3	.4	.6	1.5	1.3	1.3	1.1	.9	.9
France	.2	.3	.4	.2	.7	.5	.6	.6	.4	.6	1.3	1.4	1.1	1.0	.8
Germany	.2	.2	.3	.2	.6	.6	.6	.8	§ .8	*	1.1‡	1.7‡	1.9‡	1.7‡	1.6‡
Netherlands	.1	.1	.2	.2	.3	.3	.4	.4	.4	.5	1.1	.9	.8	.7	.6
Norway	.1	.1	.2	.2	.2	.3	.3	.4	.4	.6	.7	.7	.7	.7	.7
Portugal	*	*	*	§ .1	.1	.1	.1	.1	.1	.1	.1	.1	.1	.1	.1
Romania	.2	.3	.4	§ .4	.5	.4	.4	.6	.6	.9†	1.3†	1.2†	*	*	*
Scotland	0	0	.1	.1	.1	.1	.1	.1	.2	.4	.6	.5	.4	.5	.4
Sweden	.1	.1	.1	.2	.2	.3	.4	.5	.7	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.1†	1.1
Switzerland	.3	.4	.4	.4	.5	.6	.7	.8	.7	.9	1.0	.9	.9	.9	.0
Africa, Asia, and Oceania															
Australia	.1	.1	.1	.1	.3	.3	.3	.4	.6	1.0	1.0	1.1	.9	.8	*
Ceylon	*	*	§ .2	.2	.2	.1	.1	.2	.2	.3	.3	.3	.2	.2	.2
Egypt	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	3.4	4.0	4.3	4.3	3.9	3.9	*	*
Israel ¶	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	5.8	3.2	2.5	2.6	2.2†	1.4†	1.7†	2.1
Japan	1.4	1.3	1.1	1.0	.9	.8	.8	.6	§ .7	*	*	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
New Zealand	.1	.2	.2	.2	.4	.5	.4	.6	.7	1.1	1.3	1.2	1.1	1.1	.9
Turkey	*	*	*	*	*	*	.1	.2	.3	.3	.3	.4	.3	.4	*

o Includes rates of less than 0.05 per 1,000. ‡ Federal Republic. ¶ Jewish population only. § One or more years not available.
* Not available. † Provisional.

Note: Includes absolute divorces and annulments; so far as possible, excludes separations.

Source of basic data: United States—1900 to 1939, from National Office of Vital Statistics; 1940 to 1950, surveys by the Statistical Bureau, Metropolitan Life Insurance Company. Other countries—Principally from yearbooks of the individual countries; United Nations Demographic Yearbook, 1951; and annual reports of the International Statistical Institute.

[24] Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, "Postwar Divorce Rates Here and Abroad," *Statistical Bulletin*, June 1952.

in 1950 at the high figure of the immediate postwar years.[25] Whatever the immediate postwar fluctuations, the social disorganization of World War II exerted a powerful effect upon the family. This impact is not statistically noticeable in such countries as Italy, Spain, and Ireland, which do not allow absolute divorce and hence are not listed in the accompanying table. It is doubtless safe to say, however, that even in these Roman Catholic countries the family has not completely escaped the profound social changes through which we are living.[26]

Divorce and Social Crisis

There is thus a close relationship between divorce and the major crises of an urban, industrial society. A crisis represents a drastic interruption in social relationships, whereby the members of the family must adjust to situations drastically different from those with which they are familiar. In this sense, the major social crises are prosperity, depression, and war. We may briefly examine these three types of crises in terms of their impact upon family disorganization, as measured by divorce.

1. *Prosperity as a Family Crisis.* The majority of persons would doubtless maintain that boom and prosperity are good for the family, just as these conditions are presumed to be good for every other phase of our social life. This assumption is not borne out by the facts. In times of prosperity, money is plentiful and social relationships outside the home increase. Husbands and wives come in contact with other persons of the opposite sex who presumably stimulate their romantic sense, with the result that many decide to divorce their spouses and try again.

Many of the other tensions that culminate in divorce, such as the excessive indulgence in alcohol, also proliferate during times of full employment, high consumer incomes, and inflated price levels. Virtually full employment, a high level of consumer incomes, and a consequent increase in consumer spending were all characteristic of the postwar years from 1946 to 1951. These accompaniments of high prosperity combined with the social disorganization of World War II to maintain the divorce rate at greater than prewar levels.

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[25] *Ibid.*

[26] Kingsley Davis, "Statistical Perspective on Marriage and Divorce," *op. cit.*, p. 17.

2. *Depression as a Family Crisis.* Economic depression is a second type of crisis that periodically faces the family in an urban, industrial society. A prolonged period of unemployment, deflation, and lower price levels introduces a number of stresses and strains into the family, but it also tends to decrease the divorce rate. In the early years of the great depression of the 1930's, many persons saw evidence in the decline of the divorce rate that the long-term increase in family disorganization was at an end. The depression, it was hopefully asserted, brought families together and thus served at least one worthy purpose.

On closer examination, however, this optimistic prognostication had to be seriously revised. There were several depression-born factors that lowered the divorce rate but increased family stability only in the formal sense. (a) *Monetary Cost of Divorce.* The first of these factors is the monetary cost of divorce, which deters many couples from taking this step when times are hard and money is scarce. (b) *Unemployment Relief.* Single or divorced persons often find difficulty in obtaining relief, whereas those with regular family ties have less difficulty. Many couples therefore retain their formal marital status rather than get a divorce and thereby threaten their chances for relief. (c) *Employment Opportunity.* Under full employment, opportunities for women in clerical and related occupations are plentiful. In times of depression, such opportunities are strictly curtailed, a fact that unquestionably deters many women from seeking divorce who might otherwise do so. This factor also keeps the divorce rate down, although it is doubtful if family consensus is correspondingly increased.

3. *War as a Family Crisis.* Total war is a third major crisis that produces a drastic readjustment in marital and family relationships and hence leads to a higher rate of divorce. War accentuates many of the elements of social disorganization that are evident in peace times, and the family is often a casualty of this process.[27] During and after World War II, the increased social mobility, the rise in monetary income, the expansion of commercialized recreation, the addition of millions of married women to the labor force, the prolonged separation of hundreds of thousands of families, and the hasty wartime marriages were among the factors that combined to produce a

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[27] Francis E. Merrill, *Social Problems on the Home Front* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1948).

high divorce rate both during and after the actual period of hostilities.[28] In the immediate postwar period, these forces were compounded by the demobilization of the armed forces and the subsequent dissolution of thousands of marriages contracted during the preliminary defense period and the early years of the war. The result of these and other factors was the highest divorce rate in history, as the United States recovered from the greatest war in history.[29]

The Personnel of Divorce

We may next consider the personnel of divorce. In this context, we mean the number of divorced persons, the percentage of childless couples, the rural-urban backgrounds of divorced persons, the duration of marriage in relation to divorce, the extent of migratory divorce, and the regional differentiations in the rates of divorce.

1. *The Number of Divorced Persons.* Divorced persons in the population stood at 2,066,000 in April, 1951. Of this number, an estimated 1,200,000 were women and 866,000 were men. The combined figure represented approximately 2 per cent of the total population 14 years of age and older.[30] More than 2,000,000 persons occupying the status of divorced persons represent a striking change in the mores. Fifty years ago, a divorced person was so rare that he or she was considered almost a social curiosity. Today, millions of men and women are working out as best they can the complex interpersonal relationships of this new status.

Even this impressive number does not indicate the full extent of divorce in American society. The 2,000,000 divorced persons include only those listed as divorced at any one time, and do not include the other millions who have remarried subsequent to divorce. In the decade 1940–1950, approximately 4,000,000 marriages were dissolved by divorce, involving some 8,000,000 persons. The great majority of these divorced persons were subsequently absorbed into the married population. As a result, the percentage of the male population reported as divorced in 1950 was "only" 2.2, as compared to 1.9 per cent in 1940. The comparable figures for women were 2.7 in 1950 and 2.3 in 1940.[31]

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[28] Reuben Hill, *Families under Stress* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1949).

[29] Cf. also Earl L. Koos, "Class Differences in Family Reactions to Crisis," *Marriage and Family Living*, Summer 1950, XX, 77-78.

[30] Bureau of the Census, "Marital Status and Household Characteristics: April 1951," *Current Population Reports: Population Characteristics*, April 29, 1952, Series P-20, No. 38, Table V.

Furthermore, large numbers of divorced persons hesitate to admit their status to the census enumerator. Hence a considerable (although obviously indeterminate) number of the 7,084,000 women listed as widows and the 2,216,000 men listed as widowers should be added to the total of the divorced. Finally, a number of the 1,700,000 persons officially listed as "separated" because of marital discord will shortly swell the number of divorced in the population, as soon as the legal proceedings are carried through.[32] The data on family disorganization related directly or indirectly to divorce are thus far from complete. They are sufficiently complete, however, to suggest the number of persons who have been faced with the crisis of divorce in recent years.

2. *Person to Whom Divorce Granted.* A second consideration involves the person to whom the divorce is granted. Data on a national scale are not available, but information for a selected group of 17 states in 1949 indicates that 73 per cent of divorces were granted to the wife and 27 per cent to the husband.[33] Men do not initiate divorce proceedings to the same extent as do their wives. This situation results partly from a somewhat outmoded sense of chivalry, whereby the man voluntarily assumes the legal and moral onus of divorce, rather than expose the woman to any possible social opprobrium. Women are constrained by the mores from taking the initiative in adulterous relationships. They also become involved to a lesser extent than men in excessive drunkenness, another type of conduct that furnishes grounds for divorce. The husband continues to play the role of martyr in the social drama of divorce and to accept whatever guilt society may still attribute to the defendant in a divorce action.

3. *Divorce and Duration of Marriage.* A large proportion of all divorces occur during the early years of marriage. In the sample of

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[31] Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, "American Family Ties Strengthened," *Statistical Bulletin,* March 1951. These figures for the percentage of divorced in the population are not strictly comparable with those in the previous paragraph. The latter are for April, 1951, whereas those used here for comparative purposes are for April, 1950.

[32] *Ibid.*

[33] Federal Security Agency, "Statistics on Divorces and Annulments: Specified States, 1949," *op. cit.,* Table 4.

17 states noted immediately above, 77,332 divorces were examined in terms of the duration of the marriage. Approximately 6 per cent occurred in marriages whose duration was less than 1 year, 9 per cent in those with a duration of 1-2 years, 11 per cent in those lasting 2-3 years, 10 per cent in those with a duration of 3-4 years, and 7 per cent in marriages with a duration of 4-5 years.[34]

Data on a national scale for duration of marriage in the year 1948 were examined with the same general result. Commenting upon this situation, Jacobson states that "the rate was at a maximum of 26 per 1,000 couples in the third year of marriage (duration 2-3 years), dropped sharply through the 7th year, and thereafter declined less rapidly but almost steadily with each advance of matrimonial duration. By the 20th wedding anniversary, the rate was down to 8 per 1,000."[35] One of the real reasons (as distinguished from the legal reasons) for divorce seems to be the disenchantment that accompanies a waning of romantic love. This process reaches its height in the early years of matrimony.

4. *Divorce and Childless Couples.* The majority of divorces are granted to childless couples, although the proportion of divorces involving children has increased in recent decades. In the period from 1922 to 1948, the proportion of divorced couples with children increased from 38 to 42 per cent. Approximately three out of every five divorces still do not involve children. This fact has often been interpreted as proof that children hold the family together and prevent divorce. The relationship between divorce and children, however, is not so simple. The mere fact that 60 per cent of divorces occur to childless couples does not necessarily prove the case one way or the other. The heaviest concentration of divorces occurs in the early years of marriage, when childlessness is at its height.[36]

The relationship between children and divorce may be further explored in terms of the length of marriage. The proportion of divorces involving children increases with the length of marriage. Less than 10 per cent of the marriages ending in divorce before one year have children, whereas 65 per cent of those ending in divorce in the eighteenth year of marriage have children. In the year 1948, children were involved in more than half of the divorces granted to couples married from 7 to 23 years. In view of these and other pertinent facts, the mere presence of children apparently does not constitute a deterrent to divorce. Rather, suggests one authority, "Divorce and childlessness are probably concomitant results of more fundamental factors in the marital relationship." [37]

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[34] Federal Security Agency, "Statistics on Divorces and Annulments: Specified States, 1949," *op. cit.*, Table 5.

[35] Paul H. Jacobson, "Differentials in Divorce by Duration of Marriage and Size of Family," *American Sociological Review*, April 1950, XV, 239.

[36] Paul H. Jacobson, "Differentials in Divorce by Duration of Marriage and Size of Family," *op. cit.*, p. 241.

5. *Divorce and Urbanism.* Many of the factors that contribute to the disorganization of the family are related to urban life. The stronghold of the traditional family is still the rural-farm population, with the rural-nonfarm group coming next.[38] Divorce is more an urban than a rural-farm or rural-nonfarm problem. The percentage of divorced persons in the population increases in proportion to the degree of urbanism. For the female population, only 0.7 per cent of those in rural-farm areas are divorced, as compared to 1.5 for the rural-nonfarm and 2.6 for the urban areas. For the male population, a similar differential is observed, with 0.9 per cent of the men in the rural-farm areas divorced, compared with 1.4 in the rural-nonfarm, and 1.9 in the urban areas.[39]

Data on earlier periods indicate that the disparity is even more marked in terms of the size of the city; the ten largest cities show a disproportionate number of divorced persons in terms of the percentage of the total population residing therein.[40] As urban attitudes and behavior patterns are disseminated throughout the country, this disparity between country and city may gradually decrease.

6. *Regional Differences in Divorce.* Divorce increases in frequency as we move from east to west across the continental United States. The New England and Middle Atlantic States have the lowest rates, the North Central and South Atlantic States next, and the Moun-

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[37] *Ibid.*, p. 244.

[38] The urban population, as defined by the Bureau of the Census, comprises all persons living in incorporated communities of 2,500 or more; the rural-farm population includes all persons actually living on farms, whereas the rural-nonfarm population makes up the remaining rural population.

[39] Bureau of the Census, "Marital Status and Household Characteristics: April, 1951," *Current Population Reports: Population Characteristics, op. cit.*, Table 6.

[40] Ernest W. Burgess and Harvey J. Locke, *The Family* (New York: American Book Company, 1945), pp. 633-34.

tain and Pacific States have the highest rates.[41] These differences cannot be explained in religious terms alone, but rest rather with the culture patterns prevailing in the various regions. In this category are such matters as the sex ratio, the relations between the sexes, racial composition, nationality background, types of occupations, as well as religion. Frontier conditions are still reflected in the laws and family patterns of the West, and they make for more marital freedom, more individual choice for women, and a consequently higher rate of divorce. Just as the American culture pattern as a whole differs from that of any other nation, so various regional differentiations exist among the subcultures within the American configuration. Divorce is one of the most spectacular of these subcultural expressions.

7. *Migration and Divorce.* It is widely assumed that the principal reason for the high divorce rates in the Pacific and Mountain States is the laxity of their divorce laws and the consequent influx of divorce-seekers from other parts of the country. This assumption is incorrect. Despite the publicity given to the six-weeks residence provision in Nevada, the number of migratory divorces in that state and in the country as a whole is comparatively small. Some 10,800 divorces were granted in Nevada in 1949. This number, however, comprised only a small percentage of the 397,000 divorces granted in the country as a whole for that year.[42] As a national phenomenon, therefore, migratory divorce is relatively unimportant. The great majority of marriages are dissolved according to the laws of the states in which the persons are currently resident.[43]

Adjustment to Divorce

Divorce represents a crisis in the lives of the participants. A crisis may be further defined as "a stage in any given interactional process where a person or group is involved in a problem that has proved insoluble by whatever habits, customs, or routine practices have been depended upon, and attention is suddenly focused upon the crossroads or the impasse."[44] Divorce creates a social situation that is perhaps unique in the number and complexity of the adjustments that must be made. Death is also a crisis, but there are certain cultural patterns that define the roles of the bereaved. Divorce has few, if any, of these accepted patterns. Divorced persons are no longer viewed with the suspicion and disapproval formerly accorded them, but the pattern of their lives is still not socially defined or sanctioned. We may indicate some of the principal forms of adjustment necessitated by the crisis of divorce.

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[41] Federal Security Agency, National Office of Vital Statistics, "Summary of Marriage and Divorce Statistics: United States, 1949," *Vital Statistics-Special Reports, op. cit.*, Table 2.

[42] *Ibid.*, Table 2.

[43] Cf. Mabel A. Elliott, "Divorce Legislation and Family Instability," *op. cit.*, pp. 136-37.

1. *Emotional Adjustments.* The divorced person is often in a highly emotional state. This condition is brought about partly by the process of alienation and conflict that preceded the divorce[45] and partly by the ambiguous social situation in which he now finds himself. Many of the immediate emotional reactions to divorce are similar to those of death and bereavement. The divorced person may successively experience such varied emotions as refusal or rejection of the fact of divorce, unusual calm, wild manifestations of grief, nervous shock, self-pity or self-justification, and other complex emotions connected with a final break in this most intimate of human relationships. The internal maladjustment of the divorcee may take the form of "suppressions, repression, regressions, ambivalent motivations, blockages, cleavage between lust and love, loss of self-confidence and ambition, doubts, indecision, nightmare, morbidly transferred attachments or aversions—all these and more."[46]

2. *Sexual Adjustments.* Closely allied to the emotional changes is the necessary adjustment of the sexual relationship. This relationship involves far more than sexual intercourse and its related manifestations. Adjustments in this field involve all the personal intimacies comprising the affectional function of the family, in which sex *per se* is by no means all-important. The sex relationship, broadly defined, plays such a fundamental part in contemporary marriage that its deprivation involves an acute psychological crisis. On the narrower level of sex relations as such, the divorced person must also make certain fundamental decisions. He may practice rigid celibacy, or may become immersed in work, play, or a new love

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[44] Thomas D. Eliot, "Handling Family Strains and Shocks," chap. 21, *Family, Marriage, and Parenthood*, eds. Howard Becker and Reuben Hill (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1948), p. 617, footnote.

[45] Waller, *The Family*, pp. 513-29.

[46] Eliot, *op. cit.*, p. 628.

object. Sexual experimentation may be attempted, with the possibility of personal disorganization weighing more heavily upon the divorced woman because of the still-prevailing double standard of morality.[47]

The researches of Kinsey have thrown some light upon the sexual adjustments of divorced persons. The divorced male apparently resumes an active sexual life, with one or more new partners, a short time after the divorce. Despite the ambiguous social definition of such extramarital activities, the male appears to be almost as sexually active as before the divorce. The divorced woman, on the other hand, does not appear to follow the same pattern. The sexual role of the woman in our society, whatever her marital status, is less aggressive than that of the man. Hence many women apparently cease heterosexual activity almost completely after divorce.[48] Those who accept such experience may also invite social difficulties.[49]

3. *Social Adjustments.* Divorce also introduces a variety of complications into the social relationships of the erstwhile spouses, who are suddenly called upon to assume new and very different roles. Much of their social life during their married years involved other couples of similar age, occupation, interest, and subcultural characteristics. After the divorce, at least one (and possibly both) of the participants must perforce seek new friends and relationships. Furthermore, mutual friends often take sides, and the role of the "guilty" party is often rendered more difficult by the zealous partisans of the "innocent" party. The former spouse must often choose which friends he is going to retain and which groups he will continue to frequent. This choice is sometimes made for him by mutual friends, who consider that he has injured his erstwhile spouse by his actions prior to, during, or after the divorce.[50]

The social adjustments following divorce are subject to many gradations, from the instances where former husbands and wives continue many of their former group contacts to those in which one party cuts himself off completely from his former life, sometimes to the point of leaving the community. The divorced person may thus develop feelings of loneliness, anxiety, and insecurity, since he has been forced to change his personality at a relatively advanced age.[51] His basic social patterns, both those within and without the marriage, have been abruptly broken. The resulting shock to his ego may be very great.[52] Many persons lack the psychic energy to adjust to the changed status.

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[47] Cf. Willard Waller, *The Old Love and the New* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1930).

[48] Alfred C. Kinsey, et al., *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Company, 1948), pp. 294-96.

[49] Cf. also Ernst and Loth, *For Better or Worse*, chap. 4, "Sex."

[50] Cf. William J. Goode, "Problems in Postdivorce Adjustment," *American Sociological Review*, June 1949, XIV, 394-401.

4. *Economic Adjustments.* Divorced men and women are faced with the prosaic but fundamental question of economic support.[53] The problem of the sexes differs considerably. The earning capacity of the husband ordinarily continues, whereas the economic status of the wife undergoes a marked change. The wife is faced with several alternatives, once the economic security of marriage is abruptly removed. She may return to her parental home, go to work, seek public or private relief, enter into an irregular sex relation, or seek alimony. These options are not equally inviting and the choice usually becomes one of alimony or employment. Alimony is awarded to approximately one-third of all divorced women.[54] If the wife is childless and able-bodied, the judge does not ordinarily award alimony, unless the husband is wealthy.[55] Hence the majority of divorced women are obliged to enter (or re-enter) the labor market.

Almost three-fourths of all divorced women are therefore in the labor force. In a study made some years ago (1947), an estimated 1,140,000 divorced women were in the population as a whole, of whom 792,000 or 69.5 per cent were gainfully employed. This figure compared with the 28.3 per cent of all widows gainfully employed and indicates the greater ability of the divorced woman to support herself by reason of age, physical capacity, and lack of dependent children.[56]

More recent studies do not separate the widowed and divorced women in the labor force. These studies indicate that, in April 1951,

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[51] Ernst and Loth, *op. cit.*, chaps. 2, 3.

[52] Waller, *The Family*, pp. 515 ff., "Readjustment of Personality."

[53] Cf. Ernst and Loth, *op. cit.*, chap. 5, "Money."

[54] Bureau of the Census, "Divorce Statistics," *Vital Statistics-Special Reports*, June 9, 1943, Vol. 17, No. 25, Table 2, p. 463.

[55] Cf. Robert W. Kelso, "The Changing Social Setting of Alimony Law," *Law and Contemporary Problems*, Spring 1939, VI, 186-96.

[56] Bureau of the Census, "Characteristics of Single, Married, Widowed, and Divorced Persons in 1947," *Current Population Reports: Population Characteristics*, February 6, 1948, Series P-20, No. 10, Table 9.

2,990,000 women of both categories were in the labor force. This represented 36.1 per cent of the total of 8,284,000 women listed as widowed or divorced. This larger group is divided into 7,084,000 widows and 1,200,000 divorced women.[57] On the basis of the earlier (1947) figures, it is doubtless safe to say that three-fourths of the 1,200,000 divorced women were in the labor force at the time of the later study. The majority of women who have broken their marriage ties are both willing and able to be economically independent.

Divorce and Remarriage

The most popular adjustment to divorce is remarriage. By this step, many of the emotional, sexual, social, and economic problems of the divorced person are eliminated, or at least alleviated. Just as divorce is becoming an increasingly popular "solution" to the problems of marriage, so remarriage is becoming the "solution" to problems of divorce. Most persons whose marriages are disrupted by divorce find solace in another relationship. Those who view the increase in divorce as evidence of the disappearance of the family should realize that most divorced men and women are merely exchanging one mate for another. Their faith in marriage and the family remains substantially unimpaired. If all or a majority of divorced persons remained in this status for the rest of their lives, we might advisedly look to our family laurels. But this is not the case.

Precise information is lacking on the exact number of persons who adjust to divorce by remarriage. The evidence suggests that the percentage of divorced persons remarrying is higher today than it was twenty or even ten years ago. This fact reflects the recent increase in the divorce rate among young persons and the tendency of these persons to remarry. In recent years, a survey by the National Office of Vital Statistics disclosed that "all but about one-fourth of the persons obtaining a divorce in the 5 years prior to the survey date had meantime remarried." [58] In other words, an estimated 75-80 per cent of all persons currently obtaining a divorce are remarried within five years. These figures are in striking contrast to the widowed; approximately "one-half of the men and three-fourths of the women who had lost their spouse by death during the five years preceding the survey had not remarried." [59]

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[57] *Op. cit.*, "Marital Status and Household Characteristics," Table 5.

[58] Paul C. Glick, "First Marriages and Remarriages," *American Sociological Review*, December 1949, XIV, 730.

We do not know the exact number or proportion of those persons now married who have been previously divorced. We *do* know, however, that approximately one out of every eight persons (13 per cent) now married has been previously *married*. The earlier marriage may have been broken either by death or divorce, but the evidence indicates that the majority of those married before have been divorced rather than widowed. The proportion of males and females previously married is approximately the same, namely 13 per cent. There are, however, important differences between the sexes with regard to remarriage at different age levels. Under 35 years of age, 6 per cent of the men and 9 per cent of the women have been married more than once. The divorced men had a median age of 35.9 years when they were divorced, whereas the divorced women had a median age of 32.2 years when their divorce occurred. These differentials largely reflect the fact that the median age of first marriage is 24.7 years for the men and 21.4 years for the women.[60]

We do not have much information concerning the comparative "success" or "happiness" of marriages following divorce.[61] There is *a priori* evidence that second marriages might be either unusually happy or unusually unhappy. On the one hand, persons who fail in their first marriage might have certain temperamental or other personality difficulties that would render any subsequent marital adjustment equally difficult. On the other hand, men and women who have once experienced marriage may conceivably learn something in the process and hence make a more satisfactory adjustment the next time. The person is several years older when he marries for the second time and hence presumably has better judgment. Furthermore, the first marriage is often veiled in the mists of romantic love, which may temporarily obscure many aspects of incompatibility and basic disparity in values. The divorced person may therefore be looking for, in a second spouse, traits other than the superficial attractions of romantic infatuation.

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[59] *Ibid.*

[60] Bureau of the Census, "Marital Status, Number of Times Married, and Duration of Present Marital Status: April, 1948," *Current Population Reports: Population Characteristics*, March 4, 1949. Series P-20, No. 23.

[61] Cf. Thomas P. Monahan, "How Stable Are Remarriages?" *American Journal of Sociology*, November 1952, LVIII, 280-88.

The work of Waller and Popenoe was the first in this field. It has recently been supplemented by that of Goode and Locke. The general conclusion of the pioneer study of Waller was that the divorcee tended to be a poor subsequent risk because of: (a) difficult personality traits; and (b) the traumatic effects of the divorce experience.[62] In a study of remarried divorcees conducted more than two decades ago, on the other hand, Popenoe estimated that approximately two-thirds were "happy" in their new relationship, a percentage that compared favorably with the author's estimate of successful marriages in the general population.[63]

The most extensive investigation of the adjustment of divorced persons in subsequent remarriages is that of Harvey J. Locke.[64] The sample used by Locke was comparatively small (146 persons), but the intensity of the study compensates for this factor. The author started with the general hypothesis that there was no significant difference between the persons who had married after divorce and those who had married only once. This hypothesis was borne out with the divorced women who had subsequently remarried, but not with the divorced men. The general conclusions were therefore twofold: (a) "Remarried divorced women are as well adjusted in their present marriages as women who remain married to their first mates;" (b) "Remarried divorced men are less adjusted in their present marriages than those men who have been married only once." [65] The reasons for this differential are not completely clear. In the present state of knowledge, we can merely state that marital adjustment scores indicate that such a difference exists.[66]

An initial unhappy experience with matrimony thus apparently does not discourage the participants from trying again. Indeed, the person who has tasted the joys (and sorrows) of marriage has a greater inclination toward this status, as well as a greater possibility of attaining it again, than the spinster or bachelor. The young divorced woman of 30, for example, has 94 chances in 100 of eventual remarriage, whereas a widow of the same age has 60 chances and a spinster of 30 has only 48 in 100 chances of marriage. The divorced man of 30 has 96 chances in 100 of remarriage, the widower 92, and the bachelor of 30 has only 67 in 100 chances of marriage. Even in the later ages, the chances of remarriage for the divorced of both sexes are considerably greater than those of the bachelor or spinster of the same age.[67]

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[62] Waller, *The Old Love and the New.*

[63] Paul Popenoe, "Divorce and Remarriage from a Eugenic Point of View," *Social Forces*, October 1933, XII, 48-50.

[64] Harvey J. Locke, *Predicting Adjustment in Marriage* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1951).

[65] *Ibid.*, p. 309.

[66] Cf. also Harvey J. Locke and William J. Klausner, "Marital Adjustment of Divorced Persons in Subsequent Marriages," *Sociology and Social Research*, November–December 1948, XXXIII, 97-101.

Children of Divorce

Children of divorced parents are a final aspect of the divorce process. The nature of the family system in our society renders this problem especially acute. The small, closely integrated family of America embodies a high degree of emotional participation by husband, wife, and children. The small kinship group envelops the child in a cloud of affection from the very beginning. The child is devoted to his parents, who interpret the world to him from earliest infancy. These emotionally charged relationships are the core of his personality, both conscious and unconscious. The dissolution of this pattern through divorce is often catastrophic, for the child has lost an emotional security he may never recover.[68]

This sense of emotional security, of belonging, of being loved, and the assurance that nothing can shake this love comprise some of the elements which the child is taught to expect and generally receives from his parents.[69] This security is granted because he is the child of his parents, and not because he is stronger, wiser, or better than other children. When he is deprived of this appreciation by divorce, he may feel as if the floor had suddenly been yanked out from under him. In the words of a psychiatrist, "the children of divorced parents are insecure; whatever their appearance, you will find somewhere a panicky loss of morale, a figurative hanging of the head." [70]

It has been suggested that the insecurity of the child may reflect the conflict between his parents, rather than the fact of divorce as such.

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[67] Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, "The Chances of Remarriage for the Widowed and Divorced," *Statistical Bulletin*, May 1945.

[68] Kingsley Davis, "Sociological and Statistical Analysis," *Law and Contemporary Problems*, Summer 1944, X, 700-20.

[69] Arnold W. Green, "The Middle-Class Male Child and Neurosis," *American Sociological Review*, February 1946, XI, 31-41.

[70] James S. Plant, "The Psychiatrist Views Children of Divorced Parents," *Law and Contemporary Problems*, Summer 1944, X, 814.

The world of the child may, it is contended, be just as demoralized in a family where the parents are bitterly conflicting as in a family formally broken by divorce. In other words, it is the unhappy marriage rather than the divorce that poisons the world of the child, who has been taught to expect love between his parents, as well as toward himself.[71] Marital unhappiness, whether eventuating in divorce or not, is thus closely correlated with unhappiness in the children. The ideal situation is clearly a home full of affection where both parents provide psychic stability for the children. It is doubtful, therefore, whether in every case the lot of the child is worse in a legally broken home than in one marked by bitter and continuous conflict.[72]

In our ethnocentrism, we often think that personality disorganization is inevitable in the disruption of any family, no matter what the cultural setting. Actually, this problem appears to be unique, at least in terms of its virulence, to the small, conjugal family of the Western world. Children who live in the large consanguine family, where the central relationship is one of "blood" and not of marriage, seem to suffer no such stress following divorce. The children remain with the mother's or the father's family, as the case may be, and are thereby spared the difficulty of adjusting to a new family environment. Under such conditions, the care and rearing of the children do not depend upon the continuance of the husband-wife relationship. When the mother and father in our society are divorced, the family collapses. Among many other peoples, the large consanguine family continues to function and care for the child, irrespective of the relationship between a given husband and wife.[73]

In a recent year, approximately 313,000 children under 21 years of age were involved in divorce and annulment. In the same year, there were 421,000 divorces, or roughly 3 children for every 4 broken marriages. Almost three-fifths of the divorced couples, however, had no children; of the two-fifths that *did* have children, there was an average of 1.78 children per couple. The absence of children in almost 60 per cent of the divorces may be largely attributed to the predominance of divorces during the early years of marriage. There is naturally a smaller proportion of children in the early years than in the later years of marriage, and hence the majority of divorced couples do not have children. As noted above, the presence or absence of children does not appear, as such, to be the deciding factor in family stability or disruption.[74] The large proportion of children among couples that are divorced after 7 to 20 years of married life suggests that the mere presence of children is not enough to hold a couple together.[75]

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[71] Waller, *The Family*, pp. 542-43.

[72] Ernst and Loth, *For Better or Worse*, pp. 130-31.

[73] Kingsley Davis, *op. cit.*, pp. 703-4.

The custody of the children following divorce presents certain emotional difficulties. The child may be permanently awarded to the mother, on the assumption that she is better qualified to care for him than the father.[76] At the same time, however, the child may be given the opportunity of spending a certain part of every year with the father. Each parent then attempts to gain the sympathy of the child, and the latter is continually torn between two loyalties. He may develop an inordinate affection for one parent and an equally bitter hatred for the other. Such children may have their conceptions of family life so distorted that they are unable to make an adequate adjustment when the time comes for them to marry. Whatever the specific result of these situations, the effect of such a competition for affection may be one of trauma and shock for the child. In our society, the position of the child of divorce is abnormal.

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[74] Cf. Harold T. Christensen annd Robert E. Philbrick, "Family Size as a Factor in the Marital Adjustments of College Couples," *American Sociological Review*, June 1952, XVII, 306-12.

[75] Paul H. Jacobson, "Differentials in Divorce by Duration of Marriage and Size of Family," *op. cit.*, p. 239.

[76] Cf. Carl A. Weinman, "The Trial Judge Awards Custody," *Law and Contemporary Problems*, Summer 1944, X, 721-36.

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§ 26

THE REORGANIZATION OF THE FAMILY

The family of a hundred years ago had its stability virtually guaranteed by the performance of a number of basic functions. The members of the traditional family were indispensable co-workers in an enterprise that had economic, recreational, educational, protective, religious, and other tangible manifestations. These family services, as we have seen, have been assumed in whole or in part by other institutions, public and private. The contemporary family has, therefore, in a sense narrowed its functions and concentrated its efforts in a comparatively few fields. The reorganization of the family must function in the realms that are still the recognized province of the family. The solution of the present family problems does not lie in a return to the traditional family, but rather in strengthening those functions which the family still performs and which cannot adequately be met by any other group or institution.[1]

The Nature of Family Reorganization

The contemporary family is still the primary agency for providing affection between its members and for the ordered socialization of the child. Whatever may be the secondary or subsidiary functions of the family, these two are of paramount importance. As our secular society becomes more complex and impersonal,[2] the need for an intimate primary group relationship becomes greater. The individual must have some central source of affection and emotional security in a world that is becoming more and more insecure. The role of the family in the transmission of the cultural heritage likewise becomes more important, as the content of that heritage grows more complex.

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[1] Lawrence K. Frank, "What Families Do for the Nation," *American Journal of Sociology*, May 1948, LIII, 471-73.

[2] Howard Becker, "Sacred and Secular Societies," *Social Forces*, May 1950, XXVIII, 361-76.

The reorganization of the family must therefore emphasize the principal functions which the family uniquely performs. The family of the future will depend upon the adequacy with which the affectional and the child-rearing roles are carried out. The members of the family must carry on more efficiently and competently as husbands, wives, and parents if they are to live up to the high hopes which society still places in this central institution. These roles cannot be learned or communicated formally and directly, in the same sense as techniques of housekeeping, cooking, and animal husbandry. In final analysis, conjugal and parental roles reflect the personalities of the spouses. Men and women will make better husbands and wives only if they are better human beings.

The making of better human beings is the most difficult of all tasks. Nevertheless, some such effort is necessary if the family is to be strengthened. Education is one of the means by which this goal may be advanced. Those who have been exposed to higher education should, other things being equal, make better marital adjustments than those who have not. Such evidence as we have points to the fact that this is the case.[3] In this chapter, we shall examine some of the principal ways in which the family is consciously strengthened in terms of those functions which it can perform more adequately than any other institution. The family must learn to do better the things its members still expect it to do. The family cannot seek salvation in the past.[4]

Higher Education and Family Reorganization

The first level of family reorganization is the college and university. Education for marriage and family life had its principal origins here, and much of the subsequent work has likewise been pioneered at the college level. A formal course on "The Family" has long been among college offerings, with the emphasis upon the family as an institution, its history, its forms in primitive cultures, and kindred subjects. The addition of courses with a functional approach to contemporary marriage and family life has been comparatively recent. These courses emphasize the conscious strengthening of marital and family roles.

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[3] Bureau of the Census, "Characteristics of Single, Married, Widowed, and Divorced Persons in 1947," *Current Population Reports: Population Characteristics*, February 6, 1948, Series P-20, No. 10.

[4] Lawrence K. Frank, "Opportunities in a Program of Education for Marriage and Family Life," *Mental Hygiene*, October 1940, XXIV, 578-94.

The late Professor Ernest R. Groves was an innovator in this field of instruction and was perhaps its most important single figure. Beginning in 1927, he instituted at the University of North Carolina a course in preparation for marriage, which was subsequently widely imitated in other institutions. This course was introduced at the request of a group of male students, who sought the kind of theoretical and practical knowledge that a great university could provide. They specifically wanted information and counsel in the following fields: "Courtship, Choice of a Mate, Engagement, Finances, Marital Adjustment, Domestic Adjustment, meaning problems of relationship outside the realm of sex, Conception and Pregnancy, Birth Control and Divorce." [5] Other topics were added on the basis of further experience, but these formed the basic core of instruction.

The question immediately arose as to how any instructor, no matter how erudite, could have the knowledge and insight to deal with all the fields related to the family. This question has continued to plague subsequent instructors, and the answer Groves gave has continued to provide a general guide to them. In the first place, Groves suggested that college men and women do not wish to learn about such problems as pregnancy in the same way as the premedical student. They are interested in pregnancy rather as it will be encountered in their own marital experience. In the second place, Groves recognized the need for specialists, and to this end he enlisted authorities who could answer the technical questions that inevitably arose.[6]

The experience at North Carolina has been duplicated, with variations, at many other colleges and universities during the ensuing quarter of a century. In the academic year 1948–1949, a questionnaire was sent to 1,370 colleges, junior colleges, and universities to find out what, if anything, they were offering in education for marriage and family living. The questionnaire received a high percentage of responses, with 1,270 (or 93 per cent) of the institutions responding. Of this number, 632 (49.8 per cent) indicated that they offered at least one course in marriage education, whereas 638 (50.2 per cent) replied in the negative. Most of these courses were new, with 79 per cent signifying that the work had been introduced since 1934. An estimated 50,000 students annually participate in education for marriage at the college and university level.[7]

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[5] Ernest R. Groves, "Teaching Marriage at the University of North Carolina," *Social Forces*, October 1937, XVI, 89.

[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 91-92.

This course presents certain difficult problems of administration and pedagogy.[8] Considerable difference of opinion still exists concerning the major objectives of such a course. These differences may be summarized as follows: (a) Is the instruction to be primarily "cultural" in function, in the sense of providing the student with various interesting and more or less pertinent bits of information on marriage and the family? (b) Is the course, on the other hand, to be primarily "practical" in aim and hence disseminate practical information on marriage and family living (for example, information on sex instruction, contraception, pregnancy, and household finance)? (c) Should the work also have a "professional" objective, in the sense of providing background instruction for prospective physicians, clergymen, lawyers, social workers, and others who will some day deal professionally with these problems? These questions have not been (and perhaps cannot be) satisfactorily answered, and the typical course continues with varying success to be all things to all men.[9]

The motivation for seeking education in marriage and family living is strong. Many courses have been introduced as a direct result of student petitions. Some courses carry no academic credit and some carry reduced credit. Most of the courses are outside the field of major academic interest of the student—in the sense of that in which he is majoring. Despite these and other difficulties, marriage education continues to be popular among undergraduates, both male and female. The reason for this interest is not hard to find. At the college level, men and women are seriously concerned with marriage, family living, and parenthood. They will shortly choose a husband or wife, and thereby make perhaps the most important single choice of their lives. They realize the seriousness of the adventure upon which they are about to embark. They are anxious for every possible assistance in this adventure.[10]

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[7] Henry A. Bowman, "Marriage Education in the Colleges," reprinted from *Journal of Social Hygiene* (New York, 1949), pp. 3-5.

[8] Cf. David S. Brody, "Techniques in Family Life Education," *Marriage and Family Living*, Fall 1950, XII, 139-41.

[9] Cf. Frances C. Thurman, "College Courses in Preparation for Marriage," *Social Forces*, March 1946, XXIV, 332-35.

This education presents certain logical and methodological difficulties in evaluation. Education in certain skills, techniques, and quantitative knowledge is comparatively easy to evaluate. Education in marriage and family living is less tangible and hence more difficult to assess. Among the factors that enter into such an evaluation are the following: [11]

1. *Isolation.* The first problem is to isolate the educational program from all the other factors that combine to produce a happy (or unhappy) marriage. We have seen that marital success is the result of such disparate factors as the childhood emotional security of the spouses, the realization of their basic needs in marriage, a similarity of social values, and many other factors in their background, temperamental equipment, and social situation. The marriage course may be one of the factors in a happy marriage, but it is difficult to isolate and assess this factor from all the others.

2. *Definition.* The second problem is the definition of the phenomenon which we are attempting to analyze—namely, marital happiness, adjustment, or success.[12] Education for marriage presumably increases this quality, but its measurement presents difficulties. Many persons maintain, for example, that the absence of divorce is the most positive proof of marital happiness. In view of our previous analysis, however, it is doubtful if this negative factor is enough. Many marriages that are undesirable by almost any other criteria (for example, happiness, adjustment, emotional stability of parents and children) nevertheless remain physically stable.

3. *Timing.* A third consideration involves the timing of the evaluation. Questionnaires distributed immediately after students have taken the course have a certain validity, since they reflect an educational experience that is still fresh in their minds. The final criterion, however, of such a course (presuming that this factor can be isolated) would seem rather to be the effect after several years of mar-

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[10] Cf. Lawrence S. Bee, "Student Attitudes toward a Course in Courtship and Marriage: Educational Implications," *Marriage and Family Living*, Fall 1951, XIII, 157-60.

[11] The following is adapted from John F. Cuber, "Can We Evaluate Marriage Education?" *Marriage and Family Living*, Summer 1949, XI, 93-95.

[12] Cf. Robert M. Frumkin, "The Indirect Assessment of Marital Adjustment," *ibid.*, August 1952, XIV, 215-18.

riage. At this time, the erstwhile students will have had a number of years in which to put their knowledge and insights into practice. Ideally, the evaluation might come several times during married life—in the early years before the children have come, in the middle years when the children are adolescent, and finally in the stage of the empty nest, when the spouses find themselves once more alone.

4. *Norms.* A final evaluative consideration involves the normative factors in a successful marriage, with or without benefit of education. Most persons view marital success in conventional terms, and any departure from the norm is considered as evidence of failure, no matter what the other considerations may be. Marriages that are voluntarily childless, those in which one or both parties is sexually emancipated, and those marked by other unconventional relationships are thus ordinarily judged as unsuccessful by society, no matter what the participants may think. Hence marriage education is often judged on the basis of conventional marital patterns, rather than the personal needs of the actual spouses.[13]

Secondary Education and Family Reorganization

Marriage education on the college and university level has been accompanied by similar work on the secondary level. At first glance, such a program seems both simple and eminently practical, since the majority of boys and girls marry within a few years of high school and hence are never exposed to further instruction. In October, 1951, only 26.2 per cent of the age group 18-19 years and 8.6 per cent of the age group 20-24 years were in school.[14] If such instruction is important for the small fraction of the population (perhaps 15 per cent) able to attend institutions of higher learning, it is equally important for the millions who never go farther than high school. Marriage is one of the few common experiences shared by the vast majority of men and women. It would seem logical, therefore, that high school and college graduates should share equally in instruction for this experience.[15]

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[13] Cuber, *op. cit.* Cf. also Lawrence S. Bee, "Evaluating Education for Marriage and Family Living," *Marriage and Family Living*, May 1952, XIV, 97-103.

[14] Bureau of the Census, "School Enrollment: October, 1951," *Current Population Reports: Population Characteristics*, July 21, 1952, Series P-20, No. 40.

[15] Cf. Elizabeth S. Force, "High School Education for Family Living," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, November 1950, CCLXXII, 156-62.

In actual practice, however, certain difficulties immediately arise that interfere with this vital educational program. An initial and often insurmountable obstacle is the misunderstanding of its nature. Persons in positions of educational authority often assume that such a course deals exclusively or at least primarily with "sex instruction," with all the controversial implications of that term. There is some evidence that objections of this type are decreasing, against both instruction in marriage and sex instruction.[16] Vested emotional interests, based upon ignorance and misunderstanding, are still very strong, however, and an adequate program of secondary education in this field is still remote.

A second type of misconception is that courses in marriage and family living deal primarily with "home economics" and hence are (or should be) confined to cooking, sewing, budget-keeping, and similar techniques. Valuable as such instruction is, it neglects the dynamic aspects of the family as a "unity of interacting personalities." Education for living in this relationship should include all the facets of personality development and personality interaction. Such matters are inevitably "controversial." But many of the central elements of marriage are also "controversial."

The problems confronting the secondary school differ in other ways from those of the college and university. One of the problems of secondary-school instruction in marriage and family living arises from the subcultural (for example, class) composition of the student body and the variety of attitudes and values represented therein. The differences between the middle class and the working class in this respect are especially pertinent. In such broad fields as the mechanics of family living (living, sleeping, and eating arrangements), roles of family members, attitudes toward family life, and desires for social mobility, the two classes differ widely. In many school systems, the pupils are predominately working-class, whereas the teachers are largely middle-class. Many of the practices, norms, and values proposed by the teachers are thus difficult for the pupils to understand or accept.[17]

The implications of this cultural diversity appear in family life education. The teacher has several options in her instruction, whether or not she is specifically aware of them. (a) The teacher may teach middle-class attitudes and practices and run the risk of mystifying or alienating many of the students; (b) The teacher may avoid any particular pattern of norms or attitudes and encourage the students to make their own choices on the basis of their increased awareness of cultural diversity; (c) The teacher may attempt to work out a pattern of family life that will be neither middle-class nor working-class and, as far as possible, will transcend these differences. The third procedure offers the best theoretical approach, but in practice it presents certain obvious difficulties. Many teachers are not conscious of class differences and would doubtless be unable to eliminate them from their teaching even if they were intellectually aware of them.[18]

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[16] Margie R. Lee, "Current Trends in Family Life Education," *Marriage and Family Living*, August 1952, XIV, 202-6.

[17] Robert J. Havighurst, "Social Class Differences and Family Life Education at the Secondary Level," *ibid.*, Fall 1950, XII, 133-35.

Despite the difficulties of bridging the class gulf between teacher and pupil, Havighurst suggests certain elements in such a program of education that might transcend this barrier. Among these common elements are: [19]

1. *Food Selection.* Disparities between the social levels and within the same social level concern such matters as the choice, selection, preparation, and serving of food. At the same time, many facts concerning diet, for example, are based upon scientific knowledge, and hence might be taught regardless of class differences.

2. *Child-Rearing.* The differences between the subcultures concerning child-rearing practices and attitudes have been the subject of extensive investigation in recent years.[20] In general, the middle-class family tends to be too strict and inflexible concerning many aspects of behavior, and as a result often introduces insecurity into the emotional life of the child.[21] The lower-class family swings to the opposite extreme and in many respects is not sufficiently rigorous in instilling some cultural norms.[22] Havighurst suggests that a positive program for child-rearing, not limited by class attitudes, is possible.

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[18] *Ibid.*

[19] The following is adapted from Havighurst, *ibid.*, pp. 134-35.

[20] Allison Davis, "American Status Systems and the Socialization of the Child," *American Sociological Review*, June 1941, VI, 345-54.

[21] Arnold W. Green, "The Middle-Class Male Child and Neurosis," *ibid.*, February 1946, XI, 31-41.

[22] Davis and Havighurst, "Social Class and Color Differences in Child-Rearing," *ibid.*, December 1946, XI, 698-710.

3. *Family Size.* The middle-class teacher is familiar with the arguments favoring the limitation of the family. As followed by the middle-class family in recent decades, this practice would eventually lead to a declining population and the extinction of the middle class as presently constituted. At the same time, many lower-class families have more children than they can adequately care for, and the latter bring their attitudes against family limitation into the classroom. The course in family living should, in Havighurst's judgment, consider this problem of family size in all of its "economic, religious, biological and socio-ethical aspects," apart from the bias of class.

4. *Parent-Child Relationships.* This term differs from #2 above in that the parent-child category refers to relationships between adolescents and their parents in the family. The course in family living might thus consider emotional factors such as conflicts, dependence, rejection, affection, mutual respect, and emotional independence. These relationships transcend social class and are encountered by all of the subcultural groups in the secondary school.

5. *Sex Relations.* This is admittedly the most difficult of all fields of instruction at the secondary level. The class differences are very strong, with the lower classes taking a more permissive attitude toward premarital sexual intercourse and the middle classes defining the problem primarily in moral terms. Furthermore, the typical class patterns of sex behavior are so firmly established by mid-adolescence that any instruction subsequent to that time apparently has little effect.[23] Finally, the subject is highly controversial, replete with emotionally-freighted value judgments, and laden with difficult problems for the teacher, no matter how well trained she may be. Despite these and other difficulties, however, honest and informed instruction in sex relations is clearly vital to the program of family education.[24]

A final consideration in family life education at the secondary level is the desirability or practicality of limiting such education to courses specifically so designed. In other words, the solution may not lie in introducing specific courses in marriage and family living but rather in rethinking the entire curriculum in terms of the needs and aspirations of the family.[25] The totality of the school experience, in short, has a bearing upon the personalities of the students and hence upon their roles as future husbands and wives. The curriculum of the secondary schools is increasingly oriented toward more vocational training. It is well to remember that the great majority of high school boys and girls will be husbands and wives as well as breadwinners and homemakers. The secondary school might be the primary agency for the dissemination of pertinent scientific information on the family. The school also has the final responsibility for emphasizing those intangible values that are essential to effective family living.[26]

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[23] Alfred C. Kinsey, *et al., Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Company, 1948), chap. 11.

[24] Cf. B. F. Timmons, "Background Factors in Preparation of Teachers and Leaders in Family Life Education," *Marriage and Family Living,* Winter 1950, XII, 9-10.

Marriage Counseling and Family Reorganization

A third major field of family reorganization is marriage counseling. This activity is broadly defined as "the promotion of adequate preparation for and adjustment in marriage." [27] In these terms, marriage counseling is nothing new but is an activity that has been practiced by the group elders as long as organized human life has existed. In the professional sense, however, marriage counseling is very new. The earliest work in this field arose in Germany in the years immediately after World War I. When the Nazi party came to power in 1933, there were several hundred marriage consultation centers in Germany. This work could not be conducted under the Hitler regime, but was continued in the democratic countries of Scandinavia. The earliest work in marriage counseling in the United States began in 1929 in New York City and was carried on by Dr. Abraham Stone and Dr. Hannah Stone. Marriage counseling as a profession is therefore less than three decades old in this country.[28]

Like many other professional activities, marriage counseling has developed from various backgrounds and has demonstrated an increasing emphasis upon professional standards. Chronologically, this development has taken the following course in the United States: (a) Initially, as a by-product of other professions, notably medicine, the law, and the ministry; (b) As an adjunct to community agencies originally specializing in religious, welfare, educational, and medical services; (c) As a service conducted independently by persons trained in one of the older professions; (d) Finally, as a profession in its own right, practiced by persons specially trained for this work.[29] In 1942 the American Association of Marriage Counselors was formed to promote high standards in marriage counseling and to advance professional activity in this rapidly emerging field.[30]

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[25] American Association of School Administrators, Commission on Education for Family Life, *Education for Family Life* (Washington, 1941).

[26] For additional information on this field, see Esther S. Handwerk, "Selected Bibliography on Education for Marriage and Family Life in the Schools," *Marriage and Family Living*, August 1952, XIV, 207-14.

[27] Emily Hartshorne Mudd and Malcolm G. Preston, "The Contemporary Status of Marriage Counseling," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, November 1950, CCLXXII, 102.

[28] Abraham Stone, "Marriage Education and Marriage Counseling in the United States," *Marriage and Family Living*, Spring 1949, XI, 38-39.

The marriage counselor performs a variety of functions. He is called upon to answer questions and give aid in many aspects of the marital relationship. These functions may be better understood when we examine a random list of reasons for consulting a marriage counselor, gathered from the case records of a large metropolitan agency. These reasons include: "general preparation for marriage; whether to have medical examination; parental ties and parental attitudes toward . . . marriage; doubts and questions about marriage in general or about a specific partner; whether or not to have children and when; adjustment to partner . . . ; illegitimate pregnancy . . . ; sexual adjustment, such as unfocused fears about sex or past sexual behavior of self and/or partner; lack of sex desire and homosexuality; and situational and environmental reasons, including reasons related specifically to illness and difficulties of the partner or the self." [31]

The above are the verbalized difficulties and may or may not be the real ones, of which the individual is often unaware. Hence the counselor must not only possess a deep insight into human motives and behavior, but must also be trained in the arts and sciences of personality direction.[32]

This training must be both broad and thorough.[33] It involves three related aspects. (a) The counselor should be a specialist in marriage and family relationships. (b) He should also have a fund of information on the practical aspects of family life. (c) He should, finally, be aware of difficulties outside his own competence that call for other professional services. This program calls for some training at the graduate level in the following fields: [34] (a) psychology; (b) sociology; (c) biology; (d) economics; (e) law; (f) medicine; [35] (g) psychiatry; [36] and (h) community resources.

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[29] Mudd and Preston, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

[30] Stone, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

[31] Mudd and Preston, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

[32] Robert A. Harper, "Marriage Counseling: Art or Science?" *Marriage and Family Living*, Fall 1951, XIII, 164-66.

[33] Cf. Mildred I. Morgan, "Course Content of Theory Courses in Marriage Counseling," *ibid.*, Summer 1950, XII, 95-99.

This is a formidable range of information, and the marriage counselor obviously cannot have specialized knowledge in all, or even a majority, of these fields. He should, however, have a graduate degree in one of these or related specialties, plus adequate knowledge in the others to answer the simpler questions of his clients. In addition, the counselor should be able to direct the client to a qualified specialist when this appears necessary. The counselor, for example, need not be a trained psychiatrist, but he should have sufficient background in this field to recognize a clinical neurosis or psychosis when he sees one.[37]

The techniques and procedures of the marriage counselor are still in the process of formulation and development. In certain respects, counseling is an art rather than a science and reflects the intuitions of a sensitive and well-informed person as he encounters the problems of human relationships. Some counselors, for example, maintain that the client should be consciously directed to some goal or goals, with a maximum of direction coming from the counselor. Others insist that the counselor should listen rather than direct, and should let the client make his own decisions, or at least appear to do so.[38]

Furthermore, the techniques will necessarily vary on the basis of the special interest of the counselor. Those with a psychological orientation will tend to stress diagnostic tests,[39] whereas the counselor with a sociological background will emphasize marital and family roles and other culturally-determined aspects of behavior.[40]

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[34] "Professional Education for Marriage and Family Counseling," *ibid.*, Autumn 1944, VI, 70-72.

[35] Cf. Nadina Kavinoky, "The Gynecologist as Marriage Counselor," *ibid.*, Spring 1950, XII, 44-45.

[36] Cf. O. Spurgeon English, "Psychiatry's Contributions to Family Life," *ibid.*, Winter 1950, XII, 3-5.

[37] Cf. Maurice J. Karpf, "Marriage Counseling and Psychotherapy," *ibid.*, Fall 1951, XIII, 169-78.

[38] Carl R. Rogers, *Counseling and Psychotherapy* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1942).

[39] Clifford R. Adams and Vance O. Packard, *How to Pick a Mate* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, 1946).

Despite these differences in background and orientation, there are certain general principles which many (although by no means all) counselors would probably accept. Some of these principles are merely organized common sense, whereas others have emerged from thousands of counseling interviews. Among these principles, as tentatively set forth by an eminent marriage counselor, are the following: [41]

1. *Flexibility.* The counselor should maintain an open mind and be willing to change any initial preconceptions in the light of the changing situation.

2. *Objectivity.* The counselor should remain objective and avoid taking sides (or seeming to do so) in the marital difficulties of his clients.

3. *Reticence.* The counselor should realize that the problem as initially presented by the client is often not the most important one. Because of an initial shyness or reticence, the main problem does not come out until later.

4. *Sex Behavior.* The counselor should realize that complaints of sexual incompatibility between husband and wife are often the result of, or a cover for, social or cultural incompatibility.

5. *Normality.* The counselor should not assume that his client has a neurosis or psychosis unless and until this fact has been demonstrated by a competent psychiatrist. The counselor should thus assume that his client is mentally "normal." [42]

6. *Advisory Role.* The counselor should do as much listening and as little talking as possible, since one of the primary functions of counseling is the catharsis deriving from free and complete discussion. Furthermore, the counselor should try to have the client work out his own plan of action, rather than specifically suggest one for him. In this way, the client may become ego-involved in the plan

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[40] John F. Cuber, *Marriage Counseling Practice* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1948).

[41] The following is adapted from Maurice J. Karpf, "Some Guiding Principles in Marriage Counseling," *Marriage and Family Living*, Spring 1951, XIII, 49-51.

[42] Cf. Walter Stokes, "Legal Status of the Marriage Counselor," *ibid.*, Summer 1951, XIII, 113-15.

Cf. the rejoinder by Albert Ellis, "Legal Status of the Marriage Counselor: a Psychologist's View," *ibid.*, Summer 1951, XIII, 116-20.

and will execute it much more willingly than if it came from the counselor.

7. *Joint Conferences.* The counselor should try to see both parties to the controversy, in order to understand the situation as a whole. He should not, ordinarily, see them together. Husbands and wives can often berate each other in private but still not carry a permanent grudge. Once these accusations are made in the presence of a third party, however, they take on an objective reality and are more difficult to forget or forgive.[43]

Marriage counseling can do much to reconstruct the broken relationships of marriage and the family. At the same time, however, this emerging profession has certain definite limitations, some growing out of the nature of marital problems and others arising from the nature of the profession itself. For example, many of the situations facing the married couple reflect social conflicts, which the counselor cannot exorcise, no matter how wise and skillful he may be. Furthermore, the public does not understand the role of the counselor and may expect either too much or too little of him. Finally, ordered scientific knowledge upon which the counselor can act is in many respects conspicuously lacking, or at least inadequate. For these and other reasons, the marriage counselor cannot do the impossible.[44]

We have considered the reorganization of the family at the college level, the secondary school level, and the adult level through the marriage counselor. Many other agencies attempt to reach the same goals, some directly and others indirectly. These agencies are varied, and we cannot consider all of them here. We may, however, indicate some of the social resources that are mobilized to bring about the stability and reorganization of the family.[45]

Family Life Agencies and Family Reorganization

The first of these agencies is specifically directed at marriage and family life on the adult level. The Jewish Social Service Bureau in

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[43] The psychoanalyst seldom interviews both parties because (a) he is anxious to cure his patient alone; and (b) he believes that the patient will lose confidence if he (the patient) knows that the analyst is seeing the spouse. Cf. Karpf, "Some Guiding Principles in Marriage Counseling," *ibid.*

[44] Cuber, *Marriage Counseling Practice*, chap. 11.

[45] For a general survey of these resources, cf. Evelyn Millis Duvall, "Organization of Social Forces to Promote Family Stability," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, November 1950, CCLXXII, 77-85.

Chicago and the American Institute of Family Relations in Los Angeles are examples of this type of organization. The work of Harriet R. Mowrer in the analysis and treatment of domestic discord cases is an important element in the former agency, and the work of Paul Popenoe is well known in connection with the latter. In the Jewish Social Service Bureau, Harriet R. Mowrer analyzes each domestic discord case in terms of the following set of factors: (a) the place of culture in personality differences; (b) the patterns of marital interaction; (c) the nature of mental mechanisms in domestic discord; (d) the treatment that grows out of this analysis.[46]

This approach combines the resources of sociology, social psychology, and psychoanalysis in the study of the interaction of two persons with different life histories. These facts are found through the directed interview. The ultimate objective of the interview is to discover the genesis and development of the attitudes that produce the marital tensions. Once these basic attitudes are discovered, the treatment consists of getting the client to reinterpret his experience and redefine his life situation in accordance with his new understanding. This reorganization of attitudes is often a slow and painful process, especially since it involves the reciprocal attitudes of two individuals, who have lived for a considerable period in an atmosphere of increasing tension. The treatment is to be judged, therefore, in terms of whether or not "the trend is . . . conclusively toward continuing the relationship upon a mutually satisfactory basis." [47] These criteria reflect the personality factors in marriage.

The American Institute of Family Relations in Los Angeles is another type of agency that has developed in response to a growing need. Whereas the work of the Bureau is largely concerned with domestic discord cases, that of the Institute deals with marriage and the family on a more inclusive basis. This latter agency is staffed by a group of specialists in biology, psychology, psychiatry, sociology, gynecology, and other disciplines. The work of the Institute is divided into the following categories: (a) educational, (b) marital and domestic counseling, and (c) premarital service. The educational function includes public lectures, forums, and the preparation of scientific publications and popular articles on marriage and the family. The domestic counseling is similar to that considered above.[48]

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[46] Harriet R. Mowrer, *Personality Adjustment and Domestic Discord* (New York: American Book Company, 1935).

[47] *Ibid.*, p. 270.

The premarital service is broadly preventive in character and hence does not attempt to reorganize a situation that has already progressed far toward complete family disorganization. Young persons seriously contemplating marriage come to the Institute and, after paying a nominal fee, embark upon the premarital program. A complete physical examination is first given to both prospective spouses. These examinations are conducted by private medical clinics outside the Institute, the girl going to the gynecological clinic and the boy to the urological clinic. Following this examination, any physiological or organic factors that might cause marital difficulties are discussed. The physical examination is followed by a psychological examination, in which several of the standard tests dealing with personality inventory, emotional maturity, and individual interests are administered. The importance of psychological factors is again indicated.

The service continues with a series of conferences on the various phases of marital adjustment. In the case of sex adjustment, a male member of the staff interviews the young man and a female member interviews the young woman. These steps are followed by a joint interview with a senior member of the clinic. There follows another series of interviews, this time on the economic aspects of marriage, including such topics as family income, expenditures, and budgeting. The psychiatrist then discusses personality adjustment, temperamental factors, emotional maturity, and other problems of interpersonal interaction.

At the end of this series of tests and interviews, the individuals concerned are presumably able to see their relationship in more objective terms and hence decide on a future course of action. The members of the staff avoid giving specific advice. They conceive their function as bringing to the proposed relationship all the available scientific knowledge and humanistic insights. The final decision is left to the individuals themselves.[49]

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[48] The Institute publishes a monthly service bulletin entitled *Family Life*, which contains summaries of recent research on the family, reviews of current literature, and notes on current trends in family life work.

[49] The description of the American Institute of Family Relations is based upon observation by the senior author of the work of the Institute.

Traditional Professional Guidance and Family Reorganization

A second form of social resource in family reorganization is the work of the traditional professions. Ministers, doctors, and lawyers deal with family problems in the line of duty, as it were, and many persons naturally turn to members of these professions for guidance. Training for these professions has until recently largely ignored the counseling function, and the family doctor, the minister, and the lawyer have perforce carried on as best they could without specific preparation. In recent decades, however, some of the professions have recognized the importance of counseling and have introduced work in this field at the graduate level.

1. *The Church Leader*. The church leader is an important force in marriage counseling. He is the member of the community best qualified to deal with the religious, moral, and spiritual problems of marriage and the family.[50] He is often called upon to discuss these aspects of marriage in large church groups and with individuals contemplating marriage or having difficulties therein. At the same time, the minister or priest should have sufficient knowledge of other aspects of marriage to direct the individual outside of his dedicated field. Such knowledge will enable the church leader to put the individual in touch with the physician, the psychiatrist, the social worker, or the lawyer. In this way, the minister can act with maximum efficiency in his own sphere of knowledge and also assist his parishioners to find specialized assistance in other fields.[51]

A large number of seminaries preparing young people for the ministry have instituted programs of training for marriage counseling. In a recent survey of 27 Protestant seminaries, all but one was found to offer some such type of training. These offerings include the following: (a) actual courses in marriage counseling that were so titled; (b) courses dealing with the psychology of interpersonal relations and having clear implications for counseling; (c) courses on marriage and the family; (d) courses in clinical treatment for various types of personal difficulty, including domestic discord.[52]

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[50] Leland Foster Wood, "Church Problems in Marriage Education," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, November 1950, CCLXXII, 171-78.

[51] Cf. Worcester Perkins, "What Contribution Should the Clergyman Make to Marriage Counseling?" *Marriage and Family Living*, May 1952, XIV, 124-27.

[52] Leland F. Wood, "The Training of Ministers for Marriage and Family Counseling," *ibid.*, Spring 1950, XII, 47.

2. *The Doctor.* The doctor is another professional practitioner who is frequently called upon to give marital counseling. The doctor is often a wise and valued family friend and as such is sought for advice by young people contemplating marriage. This advice may be in the field of health and physiological relationships, in which the doctor is specifically trained. It may also be in the field of interpersonal relationships, in which he has no specialized training and can offer only the insights of a shrewd, sympathetic, and experienced man. Increasing specialization has brought about the decline of the family doctor in the old-fashioned sense, with the result that the general counseling role of the physician may be declining.

The functions of the family doctor in marriage counseling have been partly assumed by the gynecologist, who specializes in many of these matters. The stages of premarital and marital experience produce problems that the gynecologist is uniquely equipped to solve. The latter can evaluate the physical condition of the woman before marriage so that she can have a satisfactory sex relationship. A healthy psychosexual pattern in marriage is in large measure dependent upon fully developed sex organs in the wife. The gynecologist examines these organs and can offer practical advice on the elimination or mitigation of factors that may interfere with a satisfactory adjustment.

In the early years of marriage, the gynecologist is likewise extremely important as a marriage counselor, in connection with problems of pregnancy, parturition, and the emotional reactions arising from the sexual relationship. In the later years of marriage, the gynecologist has an important advisory role during the menopause in the wife and the various glandular and emotional changes in both spouses.[53]

3. *The Lawyer.* The lawyer is a third professional man who plays an important role in marriage and family relationships. There are certain obvious limitations in this role as far as the reorganization of the family is concerned. The first contact of the lawyer with the client is often at the stage when domestic discord has reached such a critical point that the spouses are contemplating a divorce. Both parties are often under such an emotional strain that the lawyer has difficulty in getting the facts. The lawyer, furthermore, is often sought as the means to an end (that is, divorce) which the prin-

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[53] Nadina R. Kavinoky, "The Gynecologist as Marriage Counselor," *ibid.*

cipals have already agreed upon. Hence they merely seek the technical knowledge of the lawyer to carry out the divorce. In short, under the existing circumstances, both legal and emotional, it is difficult to analyze marital discord fully and dispassionately once it has come within the purview of the lawyer.[54]

The domestic relations or family court has grown up to mitigate this general situation. This court was originally an extension of the juvenile court and, hence, dealt initially with the relationships between recalcitrant adolescents and their families.[55] As presently organized, the domestic relations court has resources that the juvenile court lacks, notably the power of conciliation of the family members, the power of forcing a husband to support his family, and the power to compel the members of the family to submit to a medical or psychiatric examination.

In certain states and cities, the domestic relations or family court has exclusive jurisdiction over all cases of separation, divorce, and alimony. When this court has an adequate staff of counselors and social workers, it can accomplish much constructive work in family reorganization. In certain instances, married couples avail themselves of the services of the counselor attached to the domestic relations court, even though no divorce action is pending.[56]

Improvements have been suggested in the theory and practice of the domestic relations court. One such suggestion would involve a new process of divorce, especially involving childless couples. The couple would go to the domestic relations court and announce their intention of seeking a divorce. This act would not constitute a public record, and the couple would be instructed to keep their intention secret, as far as possible. The court would then inform the couple of a waiting (or cooling-off) period of six months before they could get a final divorce.

At this preliminary hearing, the court would also appoint a skilled marriage counselor, who would consider the problem with the spouses. This investigation would be carried out impartially, in an attempt to find out what was at the basis of the difficulty. Economic, emotional, and dependency elements would be considered, and the couple would be impressed with the severity of the step. All the resources of the marriage counselor would be applied to the case, and this function would be mandatory for everyone instead of optional for a few persons, as at present. At the end of the six months period, a divorce would be granted, provided the couple still desired it.[57]

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[54] Morris L. Ernst and David Loth, *For Better or Worse* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1952), chap. I, "The Problem."

[55] Cf. Sidney Entman, "The Origins and Development of a Family Court," *Social Forces*, October 1942, XXI, 58-65.

[56] Charlton Ogburn, "The Role of Legal Services in Family Stability," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, November 1950, CCLXXII, 127-33.

Other Social Resources for Family Reorganization

A variety of other social resources is applied to the reorganization of the family. We cannot consider all of these agencies here. Social forces mobilized to reorganize the family comprise both public and private agencies; those on the local, state, regional, and national levels; those representing the major religious denominations; and those dealing with other problems as various as home economics and mental hygiene.

In the field of family case work, for example, services to stabilize and reorganize the family are subsumed under such forms as: "public welfare departments, aid to dependent children, maternity benefits, GI loans, veterans' services, institutional care of the sick, assistance to the aged. . . ." [58] In the field of economic and social security, public and private pension plans, old age assistance, annuity programs, unemployment insurance, disability insurance, and private group insurance all contribute, more or less directly, to the stability and/or the reorganization of the family.[59]

The large and increasing programs for mental health are also related to family life, inasmuch as many emotional difficulties originate in the family and impair the normal functioning of this "unity of interacting personalities." Mental hygiene guidance programs in schools, factories, and other institutions deal with the mental health of the family member, at various age levels in the life cycle.[60] The home economics departments in secondary schools, colleges, and universities are further institutional arrangements to stabilize the family, with special emphasis upon the practical skills of homemaking. The broad field of parent education, centered about the Child Study Association of America, represents another organized effort to better the functioning of the family.[61]

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[57] Ernst and Loth, *For Better or Worse*, chap. 10, "Remedies."

[58] Evelyn Millis Duvall, "Organization of Social Forces to Promote Family Stability," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, November 1950, CCLXXII, 77.

[59] Wilbur J. Cohen, "Social Security and Family Stability," *ibid.*, 117-26.

[60] Eleanor Shenehon, "The Social Hygiene Movement and Family Stability," *ibid.*, 163-70.

Many of the professional groups interested in the family as such are combined in the National Council of Family Relations. This organization enables persons with basic orientations in fields such as the law, medicine, sociology, home economics, social work, psychiatry, and education to consider common programs for family reorganization. The Council is divided into twelve national committees, each dealing with one of the following subjects: "(1) Economic Basis of the Family, (2) Education for Marriage and the Family in the Colleges, (3) Education for Marriage and the Family in the Community, (4) Education for Marriage and the Family in the Schools, (5) International Liaison, (6) Marriage and Family Counseling, (7) Marriage and Family Law, (8) Marriage and Family Research, (9) Mass Media, (10) Parent Education, (11) Religion and the Family, and (12) Teacher Preparation." [62] The National Council on Family Relations sponsored a National Conference on Family Life in Washington, May 5-8, 1948, in which the related subjects of importance in family life were thoroughly canvassed.[63]

In this chapter, we have considered some of the measures currently undertaken to stabilize and reorganize the family. These measures, it is hoped, will contribute to the efficient functioning of the pattern of relationships comprising the contemporary family. The accumulated wisdom and insights of the social scientist, biological scientist, family doctor, lawyer, social service worker, psychiatrist, and minister are increasingly marshalled to improve the functioning of the family.

The tangible results of these efforts may never be spectacular. The social forces that have changed the family are so complex and so massive that individual or even group efforts are relatively powerless to reverse them. This somewhat bleak outlook, however, should not relieve each person of the obligation to maintain and enhance values which he considers important. In this book, the authors have made their own modest contribution to this end.

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[61] Evelyn Millis Duvall, op. *cit.*, p. 81.

[62] *Ibid.*, p. 82.

[63] Cf. *The American Family: a Factual Background*, Report of Inter-Agency Committee on Background Materials, National Conference on Family Life, Washington, 1948.

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